

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | OCTOBER 29, 2018

## **AIA Chicago Honors Three SOM Projects in 2018 Design Excellence Awards**

The Chicago chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) honored three SOM projects with three Design Excellence Awards, announced at the 63rd annual Designlight ceremony held at the Navy Pier Aon Grand Ballroom on Friday, October 26.

Optimo Hat Company, located in the Beverly neighborhood on Chicago's South Side, won an Honor Award in the Interior Architecture category, which recognizes excellence and distinction in interior architecture. As a LEED Silver adaptive reuse project, Optimo's new headquarters and workshop centralizes the company's operations inside a 100-year-old decommissioned firehouse, preserving the historic character of the building. Interior architectural surfaces use durable, long-lasting materials, including blackened steel, walnut and cork, and preserves remnants of the original firehouse, including the original brick exterior and "City of Chicago Fire Department" bronze plaque, a kitchen finished with marble repurposed from the original firehouse showers.

The Elgin Laundry Building Study, commissioned by Landmarks Illinois and developed in collaboration with the City of Elgin, received an Honor Award in the Unbuilt Forward category, awarded for projects that will not see completion yet address relevant social, cultural, and environmental challenges. The study proposes an adaptive reuse of the building, which was designed in 1967 by Bertrand Goldberg, using its soaring, daylit spaces to support an array of recreational functions and community uses. The study also aims to achieve zero net-energy in line with sustainability goals set by the Living Building Challenge 3.0, incorporating photovoltaic panels in the roof geometry; introducing additional daylighting by providing skylight glazing infill to existing removable precast ventilation panels; and supporting natural ventilation and rainwater harvesting and reuse.

The Ningbo Bank of China Headquarters, received a Citation of Merit in the Distinguished Building category, in recognition of its design concept, execution, and originality. Anchoring the skyline in Ningbo Eastern New City, Zhejiang province, the 50-story building is surrounded by a landscaped public plaza and serves as headquarters of one of the nation's fastest growing banks. Each floor of the tower rotates one degree and steps in 100mm around the central core to create a seamless, twisting form from base to crown. Ample natural light permeates the interiors, which provide shifting vantage points of the city, mountains, and sea.

### **About Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP**

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP (SOM) is one of the leading architecture, interior design, engineering, and urban planning firms in the world. Since its founding more than 80 years ago, SOM has earned a reputation for design excellence with a portfolio that includes some of the most important architectural accomplishments of the 20th and 21st centuries, and has been a leader in the research and development of specialized technologies, new processes and innovative ideas, many of which have had a palpable and lasting impact on the design profession and the physical environment. The firm's longstanding leadership in design and building technology has been honored with nearly 2,000 awards for quality, innovation, and management. The American Institute of Architects has recognized SOM twice with its highest honor, the Architecture Firm Award—in 1962 and again in 1996. The firm maintains offices in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., London, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Dubai, and Mumbai.