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30 N. Michigan Ave.
Suite 2020
Chicago, IL 60602

www.Landmarks.org

January 8, 2025

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
123 Madison Street
Oak Park, IL 60302

*Re: Agenda Item HPC2025-02 – Certificate of Appropriateness:
Ten-Story Rear Addition to 1031-1035 South Boulevard known as the
Boulevard Arcade Building*

To the Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission:

On behalf of Landmarks Illinois, I am writing to oppose the proposal to construct a ten-story rear addition at 1031-1035 South Boulevard, known as the Boulevard Arcade Building. While my organization supports thoughtful design to add density and housing to landmarked properties, we do not believe that the proposal before you is compatible with the Village of Oak Park's Architectural Review Guidelines based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. We find the proposal incompatible with these standards for the following reasons:

- The proposed addition is placed at the rear of the property, in keeping with preservation best practices, but its proposed height will overpower the historic building when viewed from the street.
- The “dynamic uplighting” and digital clock face will intentionally draw attention to the addition over the historic building.
- The metal panels proposed for the new addition are incompatible with the finish materials of the historic building.

The Boulevard Arcade Building is an individually designated Oak Park landmark, and proposals for construction on this property are deserving of a high level of scrutiny. I urge the Historic Preservation Commission not to approve the design as presented, and encourage the owner and their architect to identify an alternative design that shows more deference to the historic building.

Sincerely,

Kendra Parzen
Advocacy Manager