



Landmarks Illinois Statement on the Proposed Chicago Landmark Designation of 30 N. LaSalle Street

Landmarks Illinois respectfully opposes landmark designation for 30 N. LaSalle St., an address with particular significance to our organizational history. We do not believe this building meets the criteria for landmark designation as established by the Chicago Landmarks Ordinance.

First, we strongly disagree with any argument that the current building has civic value based on its connection to the modern historic preservation movement in Chicago or the formation of our organization, Landmarks Illinois. The demolition of Adler and Sullivan's Chicago Stock Exchange Building that previously stood at this location led to the formation of the Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois, now Landmarks Illinois, in 1971. The Stock Exchange Building was widely considered an architectural masterpiece, and it was demolished to enable the construction of the current 1975 building. The demolition also led to the death of architectural photographer and historic preservationist Richard Nickel, who was tragically killed while salvaging materials from the Stock Exchange Building. The fight to preserve the Chicago Stock Exchange has remained a part of Landmarks Illinois's identity since our founding, with the Stock Exchange arch included in every iteration of our logo. While our organization and many in the preservation movement recognize the Chicago Stock Exchange Building demolition as a cultural failure and galvanizing event, the building that followed is of little importance to that story.

Additionally, we do not believe that 30 N. LaSalle merits landmark designation for exemplary architecture. As the designation report notes, the business of architect Thomas E. Stanley was to produce economical designs for corporate interests. In that sense, his design for 30 N. LaSalle may have been successful, but we disagree that it is architecturally noteworthy.

Our organization also places a high value on the sustainable practice of reusing existing buildings. One of our organization's Guiding Principles is to promote the role of preservation in confronting climate change through adaptive reuse. We are also particularly supportive of efforts to adapt existing buildings for purposes of housing, a critical practice as the United States faces an undersupply of housing at all levels. Therefore, despite our complicated history with 30 N. LaSalle, we support the project to adaptively reuse this building. While the demolition of the Stock Exchange and related events will always be the tragedy that inspired the formation of Landmarks Illinois, it is not our position that should rule out the reuse of the current building. Nevertheless, while we support the adaptive reuse of 30 N. LaSalle, we do not believe that landmark designation is the right tool for this building. We understand that if this building does not receive Chicago Landmark designation, then it will not be eligible for the Cook County Class L Property Tax Incentive. We are hopeful that there are other more appropriate tools to allow the project to go forward.