



July 6, 2022

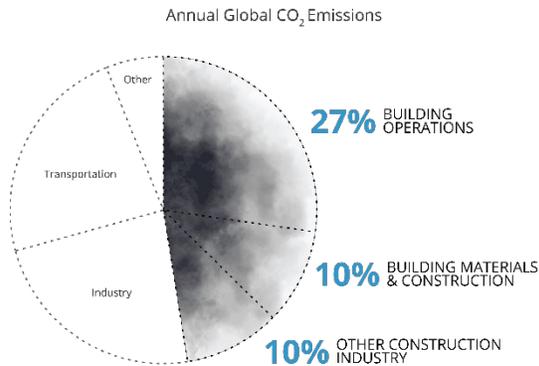
We respectfully submit the following letter of support for the preservation of the Century and Consumers Buildings to the Chicago Landmarks Commission, on behalf of the AIA Chicago and AIA Illinois membership, two chapters of the American Institute of Architects.

AIA Chicago and AIA Illinois' mission is to build on our shared architectural legacy by advocating for the architecture profession and partnering with communities. We join our voices with many notable Architects and organizations, like Preservation Chicago and Landmarks Illinois, to advocate for the preservation of the Century Building, built in 1915 by Holabird and Roche at 202 S. State Street and the Consumers Building, built in 1913 by Jenney, Mundie & Jensen at 220 S. State Street. These buildings represent significant contributions to the Chicago School of Architecture by respected firms. We stand with the communities calling for adaptive reuse and revitalization of both high-rises in lieu of their demolition. While design concerns for the Federal Complex are valid, we strongly believe that a design team will be able to address them during the revitalization process, while respecting the existing urban fabric of the State Street corridor.

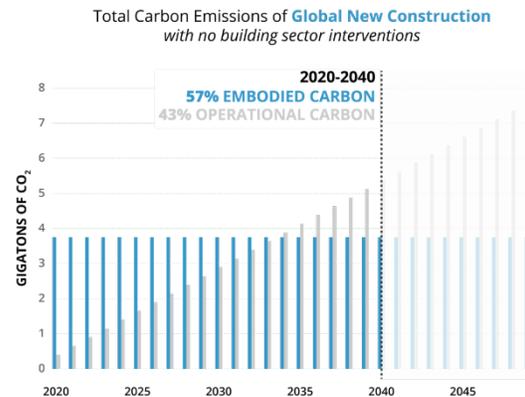
These two early twentieth-century towers are elegant examples of the Chicago School of Architecture. The rich ornamentation and striking vertically of the Century Building stands in dynamic contrast to the glass and steel Dirksen Federal Building and the adjacent all-glass skyscrapers. The terracotta-clad Consumers Building features iconic three-part Chicago style windows and strong tripartite facades fronting State Street and Quincy. These towers help anchor the State Street corridor and provide a real-world reminder that Chicago is the birthplace of the skyscraper. Their demolition would leave a hole in the State Street urban fabric that would harm pedestrian flows and the imageability of an important commercial corridor.

Recent successes with adaptive reuse have run the gambit of construction complexity. We have seen projects realize their potential after being vacant for many years. These projects include the Chicago Athletic Association, Cook County Hospital, Old Post Office, and the Reliance Building. They demonstrate that long-dormant buildings with unique challenges can yield financial and cultural rewards. Historic projects of architectural significance continue to create value more than 100 years after they were first designed and constructed. The Century and Consumer buildings were built to last and continue to enhance Chicago's legacy as an architecturally significant city.

The preservation of our buildings is also vital to a sustainable future for all Chicagoans. This summer, as we focus on Chicago’s newly released Climate Action Plan, the Mayor’s Decarbonization Task Force advised us to prioritize adaptive reuse. Buildings account for approximately 40% of global carbon emissions, and in some estimates as much as 50%, when we include upstream construction emissions.



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Data Sources: Global ABC Global Status Report 2021, IIA



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Data Sources: UN Environment Global Status Report 2017; EIA International Energy Outlook 2017

In the critical years where we must limit global emissions the Embodied Carbon of building materials must be reduced – emphasizing again the undeniable value of preservation.

As Chicagoans, it is our strong belief we should not ignore our architectural legacy. Instead, we should harness the talents of our design community to resolve any concerns, while preserving the richness of our urban fabric.

AIA Chicago and AIA Illinois look forward to working with the city, Preservation Chicago, and Landmarks Illinois on this important issue. Please reach out to us if we can assist you further in the coming months.

Respectfully,



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AIA Chicago, Executive Director



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