

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC 860-880 Lake Shore Drive

AND/OR COMMON

860-880 Lake Shore Drive

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

860-880 Lake Shore Drive

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Chicago

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

9th

STATE

Illinois

CODE

COUNTY

Cook

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME LaSalle National Bank as Trustee, Trust #7535

STREET & NUMBER

135 South LaSalle Street

CITY, TOWN

Chicago

VICINITY OF

STATE

Illinois

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Cook County Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

118 North LaSalle Street

CITY, TOWN

Chicago

STATE

Illinois

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Register of the Commission on Chicago Historical & Architectural Landmarks

DATE

January 28, 1969 (date added to register) FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Commission on Chicago Historical & Architectural Landmarks

CITY, TOWN

Chicago

STATE

Illinois

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

860-880 Lake Shore Drive consists of two twenty-six story rectangular towers set a short distance apart, with their long sides at right angles to each. The two structures are connected by a steel canopy. The apartment floors are carried on a steel skeleton whose measurements are the governing principle for the exterior design of the structures. The long sides of the buildings are divided into five bays and the short sides into three bays, each bay twenty-one feet wide. This clear expression of the steel skeleton is emphasized at the ground level by the columns that stand free of the recessed walls of the lobby, forming an arcade around the base of each building. Each bay is divided into four parts, with the two outer sections nine inches narrower than the two center panes. This variation is not a structural requirement but rather a creative element in the design.

The horizontal pattern of the windows is subordinate to the vertical lines of the columns. The strong vertical emphasis of the buildings is due to the narrow vertical I-beam rails, which rise from the second floor (the top of the arcade) to the roof line, welded to the columns and mullions. The use of the I-beams to produce the desired appearance on the elevations was determined by a requirement of the Chicago Building Code at the time. steel-framed buildings had to be fireproofed with two inches of concrete all around the structural steel. If Mies had left the buildings with the concrete exposed, the result would have been two ungainly cages of concrete filled with glass, without a strong sense of height and upward motion.

To solve the problem of the concrete covering, Mies finished the concrete-covered columns and mullions with black steel plate, and then welded on to the plate I-beams eight inches deep. To those who were shocked at the way Mies had used a structural material, steel, as applied ornament, the architect gave both a *good* reason for the I-beams and the *real* reason. Where the I-beams formed window separations, they make perfectly good sense. A metal rail is needed to separate the windows, and mullions, Mies explained, might as well be deep and narrow as wide and flat. As for taking those same deep and narrow I-beams and welding them on to the steel that covers the concrete, which in turn covers the structural column, he explained further:

It was very important to preserve and extend the rhythm which the mullions set up on the rest of the building. We looked at the model without the steel section attached to the corner column and it did not look right. That is the *real* reason. Now, the other reason is that this steel section was needed to stiffen the plate which covers the corner column so this plate would not ripple, and also we needed it for strength when the sections were hoisted into place. Now, of course, that's a very *good* reason, but the other is the real reason!

The steel plates also served another function. They were used as forms into which the required concrete was poured. Prior to the construction of 860-880, these forms were usually made of wood and had to be removed after the concrete hardened. Then the concrete had to be finished with some facing material to make it look less rough. By using forms of steel plate and welding the I-beams to the plates before they were put in place, Mies fulfilled two ends by the same means.

Floor-to-ceiling windows of clear glass are set into aluminum frames within the skeleton. In order to have a uniform appearance, all apartments were furnished with curtains of the same light color, with a second curtain track inside the first for tenants who might want their own curtains. Though the building presents a uniform pattern to the outside world, each apartment plan is flexible because of the wide and regular spacing of the columns. The north building was designed with eight three-and-one-half room apartments on each floor, and the south building with four six-room apartments; in some cases,

apartments have been combined to form larger units. These apartments are an example of Mies's theory of universal space, a space which is capable of many functions at one time and allows for changes in function over a period of time. Such versatility makes it possible for a building to be adapted to a new use rather than replaced.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES Built between 1949 & 1951 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The buildings of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe revived in Chicago the tradition of rational design and the clear expression of structure which had developed in the city during the 1880s and 1890s and was later called the Chicago school of architecture. The principles and achievements of the Chicago school were temporarily ignored as the movement faded from prominence during the first decades of the twentieth century, and their revitalization in the city of their origin was to come by way of Europe. The first and most forceful demonstration of Mies's ideas for tall steel and glass structures is found in the two apartment buildings at 860-880 Lake Shore Drive, built between 1949 and 1951. No other buildings by Mies had so immediate or so strong an impact on his American contemporaries, and the influence of the two structures was to pervade much of modern architecture.

In 1913, Mies opened his own office in Berlin and returned to it after serving as an army engineer during the First World War. Between 1919 and 1921, he developed sketches for two all-glass skyscrapers, one of twenty stories and one of thirty. These radically innovative, almost prescient drawings were exhibited soon after they were made, and they brought Mies to the forefront of the modern movement in Germany. Peter Blake, in his biography of Mies, states that these sketches of the 1920s were so daring that "modern architecture, quite literally, has not been the same since...For here, with a single stroke of the pen, as it were, Mies laid the foundation for all the great steel-and-metal skyscrapers we see about us today." Thirty years later, these projects would result in the two buildings at 860-880 Lake Shore Drive. They were to be the first demonstration of what Mies was saying in the drawings of the 1920s; they are the strongest, clearest, and as Blake puts it, "the most deceptively simple expression of his ideas he ever made."

In 1937, after the forced closing of the Bauhaus which he had served as director, Mies was invited to become the director of the School of Architecture at the Armour Institute of Technology in Chicago, and the following year he left Germany for the United States. In 1940, the Armour Institute merged with the Lewis Institute to form the Illinois Institute of Technology, and Mies was given the commission to plan a new campus for the school.

In 1946, Mies met and became friendly with a real estate developer, Herbery Greenwald. The two men got along well because, according to Mies, Greenwald was not interested mainly in profit but rather wanted to "leave his stamp on the scene" by promoting the development of the best architecture possible within the context of modern building technology and economics. Two years after they met, Mies designed the Promontory Apartments in Chicago for Greenwald. While the Promontory was under construction, Mies designed the two buildings at 860-880 Lake Shore Drive, also for Greenwald. The plan was developed from an alternative version of the Promontory, a reinforced concrete frame structure for which Mies had also drawn a steel and glass version, and from the 1920s drawing for two towers. Construction of 860-880 began in December, 1949 and was finished in 1951.

To the architect Richard Neutra, the 860-880 towers "appeared like the wonderful conclusion of a lifelong aspiring formation of ideas. It is a moral force which sets the Miesian production apart; it is not mere formal abstraction." According to Mies, an orderly building can be a powerful force for greater order in the world around it. Both the design and siting of 860-880 express this idea. Although the site is not large, there is a sense of open space at ground level which is due to the arrangement of the two structures at right

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angles to each other. This is in contrast to the usual arrangement of structures along Lake Shore Drive: close-ranked in a line, resulting in a wall of tall buildings which cuts off areas farther inland from contact with Lake Michigan. There is a feeling of easy access to the buildings because the lobbies are flush with the surrounding pavement. Seventeen-foot-high walls of clear glass set well back from the supporting columns provide a clear transition between the interior and the exterior but also integrate the two. The buildings are separate yet joined by a canopy and the paved area around them. A 1963 article on "Mies' Urban Spaces" stated that 86-880 suggests a new urban pattern which is "in scale with the pedestrian as well as the fast moving traffic of the major thoroughfare." Mies's plan for the campus of IIT and the Chicago Federal Center make similar city planning statements on a larger scale, all within the context of existing conditions.

The "Glass Houses," as the new buildings were soon nicknamed, were not only radically new in terms of form but also as a type of habitation. In November, 1951, the author of an article in the Chicago *Tribune*, headlined "People Do Live in Glass Houses!" wondered about the psychological effect of living "high in the air with no solid walls to mark off one's living quarters from the abyss outside. This is the farthest man has ever got from his cave dwelling days." The author of the article had no answer to his question. Even now, twenty-eight years later, when tall glass buildings are an accepted part of the cityscape, the debate of the effects of high-rise living, on both those who live in such buildings and the whole city environment, continues.

Mies believed that architecture is "the will of an epoch translated into space," and at its highest level expresses the moving forces of that epoch. The driving force of the present time, he believed, is its striving for universality, and contemporary architecture must express this character if it is to be valuable. These ideas are the operating principles of 860-880 Lake Shore Drive, externally and internally. The appearance of the buildings is a result of their structure and a technology which is universally applicable. Mies stated that his intention was to reverse the catch phrase, "form follows function," derived from the writings of Louis Sullivan. He said: "We reverse this and make a practical and satisfying shape, and then fit the functions into it. Today this is the only practical way to build because the functions of most buildings are continually changing, but economically the buildings cannot change."

The buildings at 860-880 became prototypes for steel and glass skyscrapers around the world, though the derivatives do not always live up to the high standards of their source. The original buildings are, as Blake put it, "deceptively simple." Walter Peterhans, who taught with Mies at IIT wrote of 860-880 soon after their construction: "These towers testify to a new and until now unknown spirit. They are built out of the familiar materials, steel and glass, and yet it is as though they introduce the era of steel and glass, as if steel and glass are seen for the first time." By transforming these familiar materials into a new and classic form at 860-880 Lake Shore Drive, Mies shaped a major part of the architecture of the twentieth century.

In current discussions of the state of contemporary architecture, the phrases "post-modern" and "post-Miesian" are frequently heard. There may be disputes about what architecture is becoming or what it should be, and there are differing interpretations of its recent past. What can be agreed upon, however, is the importance of certain structures

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which have so influenced the course of American architecture that today there is this kind of debate. The modernist or "Miesian" ideas which have dominated architectural design of the last twenty-five years or so, since the construction of 860-880 Lake Shore Drive, may be criticized now on various grounds; this does not diminish but rather points out the significance of those buildings which had so rapid and overwhelming an influence of the architecture of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. 860-880 Lake Shore Drive was the first of the glass and steel curtain wall building, the prototype for so many of the commercial and residential structures that make up a significant portion of the urban environment today. These buildings are properties of both local and national significance: they are less than fifty years old and have achieved their exceptional significance within that time, thus qualifying them for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

... none: *Architecture & Structure*; Penguin Books; 1968.
 ... Carl, *Chicago 1930-1970*, The University of Chicago Press; 1974.
 ... *The Chicago School of Architecture*, The University of Chicago Press; 1964.
 Gideon, Sigfried, *Space, Time & Architecture*, Harvard University Press; 1967.
 Hilbersiemer, Ludwig, *Mies van der Rohe*, Paul Theobald & Company; 1956.
 Hitchcock, Henry-Russell, *Architecture - Nineteenth & Twentieth Centuries*, Penguin Books;
 Neutra, Richard, *Apartments and Dormitories*, An Architectural Record Book, F. W. Dodge; 1958; page 12.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 1.17 **CHICAGO LOOP 1:29000**

UTM REFERENCES - **MIDDLEPOINT**

A	16	118670	1638500	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

From a point of beginning at the intersection of the west property line of 860-880 Lake Shore Drive and the south line of East Delaware Place; east along this south line of E. Delaware Pl. for a distance of 102.6' to its intersection with the east line of North Lake Shore Dr.; south along this east line of N. Lake Shore Dr. for a distance of 242.42' to its intersection with the north line of East Chestnut Street; west along this north line of E. Chestnut St. for a distance of 205.55' to its intersection with the west property line of 860-880 Lake Shore Dr.; north along this west property line of 860-880 Lake Shore Drive for a distance of 219.4' to the point of beginning.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Joan Pomaranc, Program Specialist I

ORGANIZATION

Commission on Chicago Historical & Architectural Landmarks

DATE

9/30/79

STREET & NUMBER

320 N. Clark Street, Room 800

TELEPHONE

744-3200

CITY OR TOWN

Chicago

STATE

Illinois

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Dail K...

TITLE

Director, Ill. Dept. of Conservation

DATE

1/18/80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

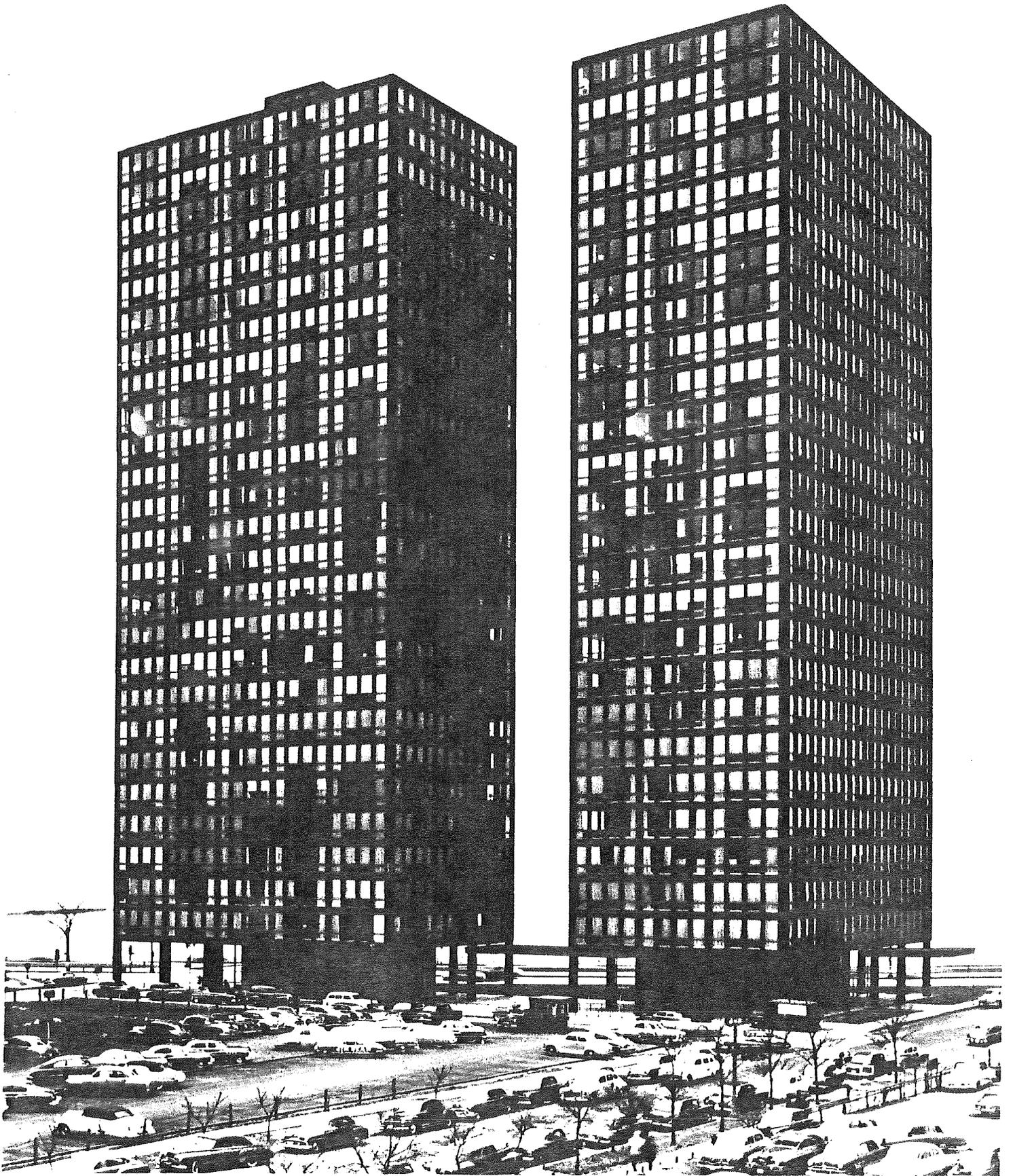
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

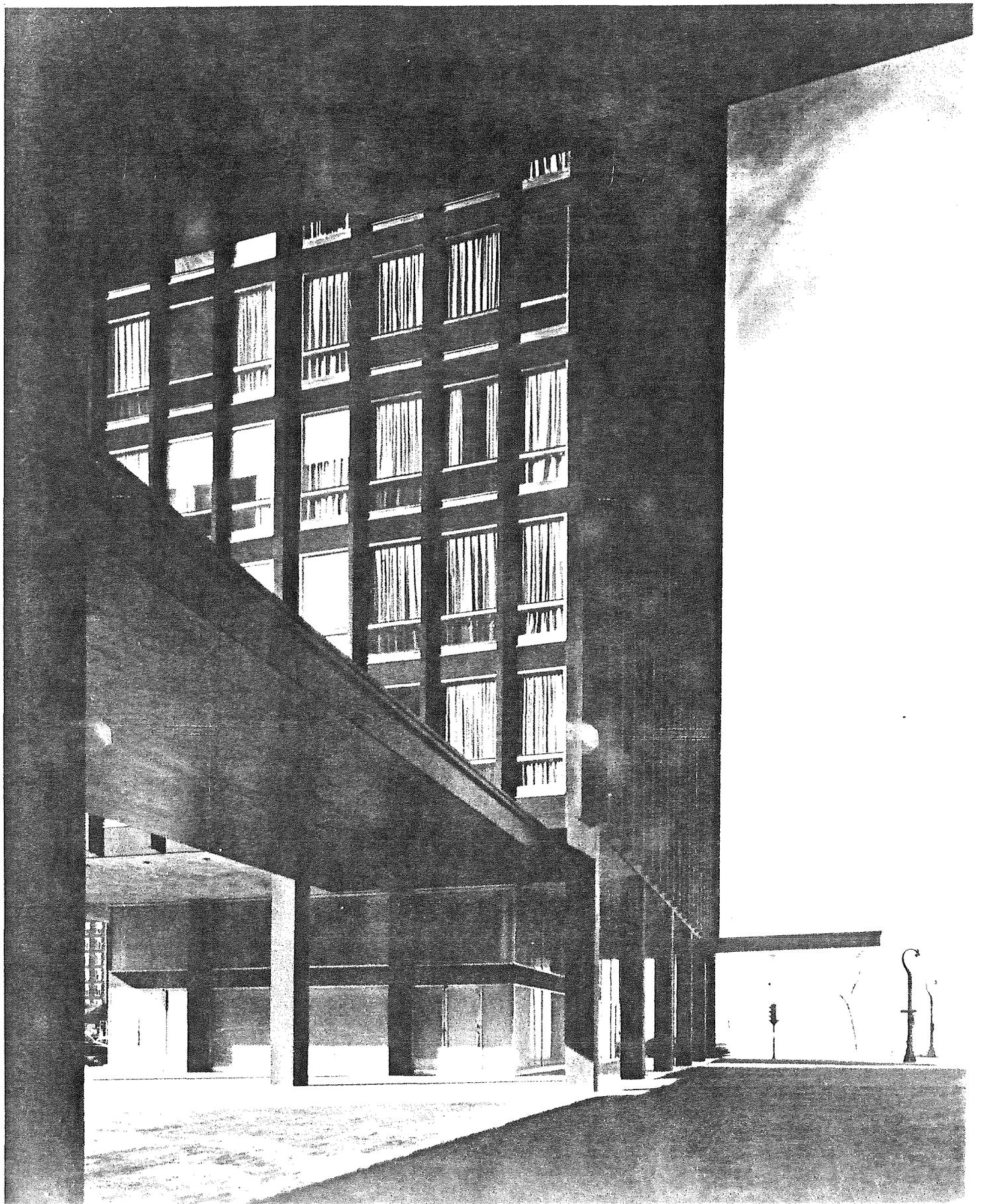
DATE

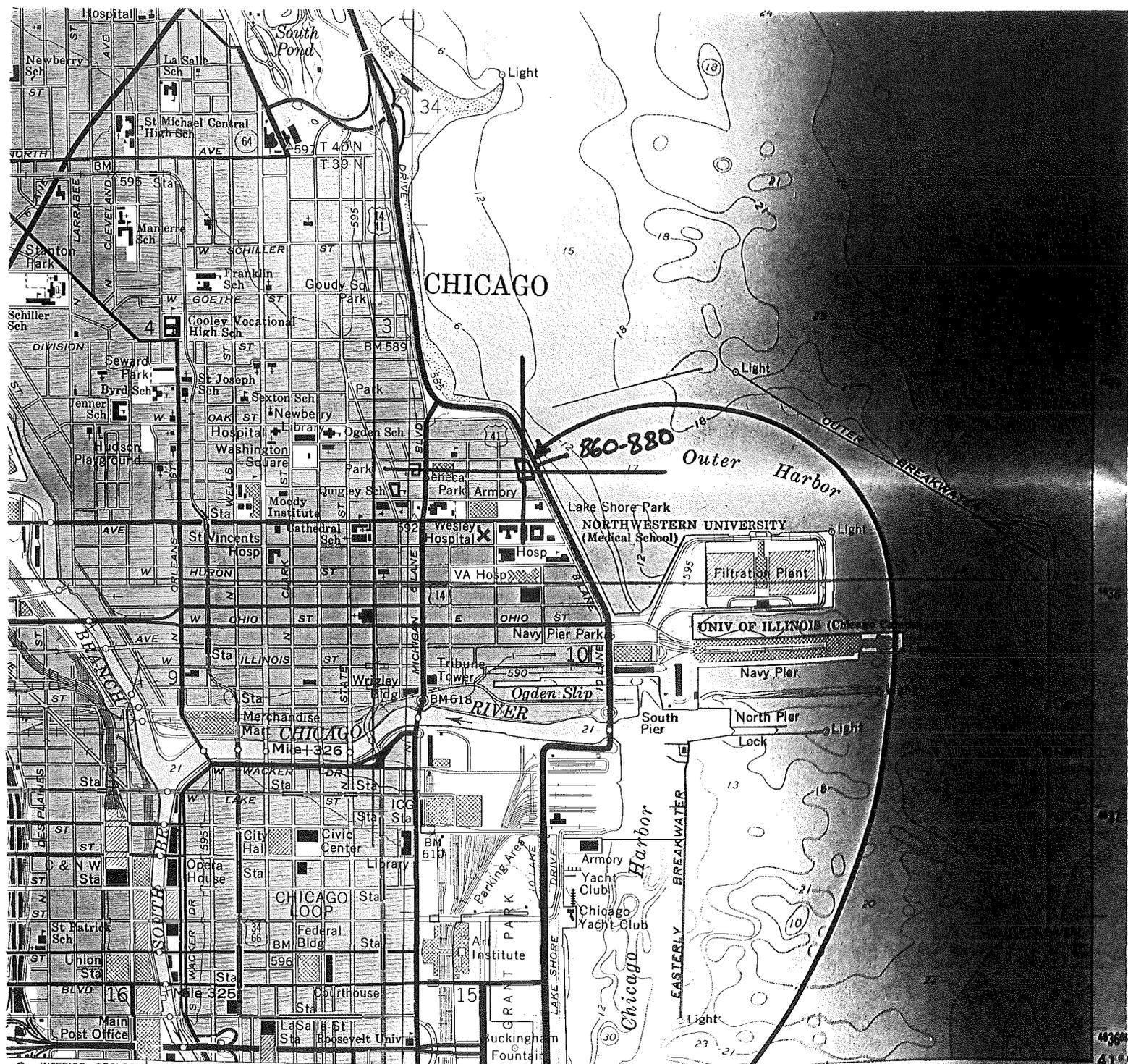
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER







INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C.—1973
 7 MI. TO JUNC. INTERSTATE 90 & 94
 HAMMOND, IND. (VIA INTER. 94) 19 MI.
 87°37'30"
 CALUMET PARK 19 MI.
 KANKAKEE 59 MI.
 14 MI. TO INTERSTATE 94
 HAMMOND, IND. 3 MI.

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
 Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
 Interstate Route U. S. Route State Route

CHICAGO LOOP, ILL.
 N4152.5—W8737.5/7.5

1963
 PHOTOREVISED 1972
 AMS 3467 I NW—SERIES V863

860-880 LAKE SHORE DRIV
Z 16
MIDDLEPOINT
E 148 670
N 1631 500