Department of Planning and Development city of chicago

November 5, 2019

The Honorable Anna M. Valencia City Clerk
City of Chicago Room 107, City Hall 121
North LaSalle Street Chicago, Illinois 60602

RE: Ordinance designating the Promontory Apartments (5530-32 S. Shore Drive) as a Chicago Landmark

Dear Clerk Valencia:

-We are filing with your office for introduction at the November 13 ,~2019; City Council meeting ~-as a transmittal to the Mayor and City Council of Chicago the recommendation of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks that the Promontory Apartments building be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

The material being submitted to you for this proposal includes the:

Recommendation of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks; and

Proposed Ordinance.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Kathleen E. Dickhut Bureau Chief
Bureau of Planning, Historic Preservation & Sustainability Department of Planning and Development

encls.

Alderman Hairston, 5 [1] Ward (via email w/ enclosure)

121 NORTH LASALLE STREET, ROOM 1000, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

ORDINANCE

Promontory Apartments 5530-5532 South Shore Drive (evens)

WHEREAS, pursuant to the procedures set forth in the Municipal Code of Chicago (the "Municipal Code"), Sections 2-120-630 through -690, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks (the "Commission") has determined that the Promontory Apartments (the "Building"), located at 5530-5532 South Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois, legally described in Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein, satisfies four (4) criteria for landmark designation as set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1), (3), (4), and (5) ofthe Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the Building, completed in the spring of 1949, was one of the first International Style high-rise apartment buildings in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the Building is the work of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, an architect acknowledged internationally as a master of his craft; and

WHEREAS, the Building possesses high artistic value as evidenced by the opinions of critics and remains to this day a stopping point on tours by architectural buffs from around the world; and

_ • WHEREAS, the Building- marks the first realization of two important design themes in Mies van der Rohe's subsequent work, the expression of the skeleton structure as an architectural element, and the use of a tripartite horizontal division in high-rise buildings; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the significance of its architect Mies van der Rohe, the Building's developer Herbert Greenwald went on to construct projects that helped shape the skyline of Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Herbert Greenwald was a pioneering developer in Chicago, one of the first to develop high-rise buildings after the lull in major construction in Chicago brought about by the Great Depression; and

WHEREAS, projects resulting from Herbert Greenwald's further collaboration with Mies van der Rohe include 860 -880 Lake Shore Drive, the Esplanade Apartments at 900-910 North Lake Shore Drive, the 2400 Lakeview Apartments, and the Commonwealth Promenade Apartments, all in Chicago, as well as the Lafayette Park development in Detroit; and

WHEREAS, while peacefully coexisting with neighboring buildings on the skyline today, the Building was quite striking for its day. Mies van der Rohe pioneered the use of a building's structural elements and their proportions to determine its aesthetics, without relying on ornamental features as architecture traditionally had. The exposed concrete columns and beams, the use of larger expanses of glass as a major feature of the exterior walls, and the recessed lobby on the first floor were avant-garde for their time; and

WHEREAS, early studies for the facade included a curtain wall scheme of steel and glass, but shortages of steel soon after World War II made this impossible. Mies van der Rohe

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would go on to design three more apartment buildings with an exposed concrete structural frame for the Illinois Institute of Technology. He would also go on to design several more apartment buildings in Chicago, Detroit, Baltimore, and Montreal, refining the original steel and glass curtain wall scheme; and

WHEREAS, there are many subtle design features that distinguish the Building. The exposed concrete columns on the exterior are stepped back three times over the height of the building to express the lessening of the structural loads. At the ground floor lobby, full-height glass windows are set back from the perimeter structure, emphasizing the skeletal column and beam construction. Standing in the lobby, one has unimpeded views toward the lakefront to the east and the meadow to the west; and

WHEREAS, within individual units, Mies van der Rohe continued to explore the components of a modern minimalist aesthetic. In-floor hot water radiant heat took the place of traditional radiators. Narrow, two -inch solid plaster partitions defined spaces while maximizing usable square footage and the flow between them; and

WHEREAS, the architect of the Building, Mies van der Rohe, is universally recognized as one of the masters of modern architecture; and

WHEREAS, Mies van der Rohe immigrated to Chicago from Nazi Germany in 1938 to become Director of the Department of Architecture at the Armour Institute of Technology, now the Illinois Institute of Technology (NT). In addition to developing a new curriculum for the teaching of architecture at IIT, Mies also designed a new campus plan for the University and "designed "multiple student and "academic buildings there including the iconic Crown Hall. As an educator, Mies influenced generations of future architects whose work dominates the skylines of Chicago and cities around the world; and

WHEREAS, other seminal works by Mies van der Rohe in the Chicago area include the Farnsworth House, 860-880 Lake Shore Drive, the Federal Center complex in the heart of the Loop, and the IBM Plaza building on the Chicago River. International projects include the Seagram Building in New York City and the New National Gallery in Berlin; and

WHEREAS, Frank Kornacker, the structural engineer for the Building, worked closely with Mies van der Rohe on several projects and with other noted architects including Bertrand Goldberg. Kornacker's notable designs in structural concrete include the Building's columns that step back over the height of the building and the pioneering structural system of architect Goldberg's Marina City, also in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, on October 3, 2019, the Commission adopted a resolution recommending to the City Council of the City of Chicago (the "City Council") that the Building be designated a Chicago Landmark; now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO: SECTION 1. The above

recitals are hereby adopted as the findings of the City Council.

SECTION 2. The Building is hereby designated a Chicago Landmark in accordance with Section 2-120 -700 ofthe Municipal Code.

SECTION 3. For purposes of Sections 2-120-740 and 2-120-770 of the Municipal Code governing permit review, the significant historical and architectural features of the Building are identified as:

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines, ofthe Building; and
- The first floor lobby as depicted and cross-hatched in Exhibit B, attached and incorporated herein.

SECTION 4. The Commission is hereby directed to create a suitable plaque appropriately identifying the Building as a Chicago Landmark.

SECTION 5. If any provision ofthis ordinance shall be held to be invalid or unenforceable for any reason, the invalidity or unenforceability of such provision shall not affect any of the other provisions of this ordinance.

SECTION 6. All ordinances, resolutions, motions or orders in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.

SECTION 7. This ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and approval.

EXHIBIT A

Building Address:
5530-5532 South Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois, 60637

Permanent Index Number:
20-13-103-009-0000

Legal Description (subject to final title and survey):
THAT PART OF BLOCK 3 IN EAST END SUBDIVISION OF SECTIONS 9, 12 AND 13, ALL IN TOWNSHIP 38 NORTH, RANGE 14, EAST OF THE THIRD PRINICIPAL MERIDIAN, TOGETHER WITH LAND EAST AND ADJOINING A PART

OF SAID BLOCK 3, DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: COMMENCING AT A POINT 240 FEET SOUTH OF THE SOUTH LINE OF EAST 55th STREET AS EXTENDED, AND 169 FEET EAST OF THE EAST LINE OF EVERETT AVENUE AS WIDENED; THENCE RUNNING EAST ALONG THE LINE PARALLEL WITH THE SOUTH LINE OF EAST 55™ STREET AS EXTENDED, 300 FEET TO THE LINE AS ESTABLISHED BY THE DECREE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS, ENTERED JANUARY 4, 1913, IN CASE 317598, RUNNING THENCE SOUTHERLY ALONG THE WESTERLY LINE OF SAID LINE AS ESTABLISHED TO A POINT 220 FEET DUE NORTH OF THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID BLOCK 3 EXTENDED EAST, RUNNING THENCE WESTERLY A DISTANCE OF 300 FEET ALONG A LINE PARALLEL WITH AND 220 FEET DUE NORTH OF. THE SOUTH LINE OF. SAID BLOCK 3 AS EXTENDED EAST, RUNNING THENCE NORTH A DISTANCE" OF 134 FEET ALONG A LINE PARALLEL WITH" THE EAST LINE OF EVERTT AVENUE AS WIDENED, TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING (EXCEPT THE WEST 12 FEET OF THE NORTH 19 FEET), IN COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

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EXHIBIT B

CITY OF CHICAGO COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS

October 3,2019

RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF CHICAGO THAT CHICAGO

LANDMARK DESIGNATION BE ADOPTED FOR

THE PROMONTORY APARTMENTS 5530-5532 South Shore Drive

Docket No. 2019-05

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago:

Pursuant to Section 2-120-690 ofthe Municipal Code of uie City of Chicago (the "Municipal Code"), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks {the "Commission") has determined that the Promontory Apartments (the "Building") is worthy of designation as a Chicago Landmark. On the basis of careful consideration of the history and architecture of the Building, the Commission has found that it satisfies the following four (4) criteria set forth in Section 2-120-620 ofthe Municipal Code: ....

1. *Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.*
3. *Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the development ofthe City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.*
4. *Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.*
5. *Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development ofthe City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, or the United States.*

I. BACKGROUND

The formal landmark designation process for the Building began on August 1, 2019, when the Commission approved a preliminary landmark recommendation (the "Preliminary Recommendation") for the Building as a Chicago Landmark. The Commission found that the Building meets four (4) of the seven (7) criteria for designation, as well as the integrity criterion, identified in the Chicago Landmarks Ordinance (Municipal Code, Section 2-120-580 et seq.). As part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission preliminarily identified the "significant historical and architectural features" ofthe Building as:

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the Building; and
- The first floor lobby, as depicted and identified on Exhibit 1, attached and incorporated into the Preliminary Recommendation.

Also, as part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission adopted a Designation Report, dated August 2019, the most current iteration of which is dated October 2019, incorporated herein and attached

hereto as Exhibit A (the "Designation Report");

At its regular meeting of September 5, 2019, the Commission received a report incorporated herein and attached hereto as Exhibit B (the "Department of Planning and Development Report") from Eleanor Esser Gorski, AIA, then Acting Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development, stating that the proposed landmark designation of the Building supports the City's overall planning goals and is consistent with the City's governing policies and plans.

On July 2, 2019, the Commission officially requested the consent to the proposed landmark designation from the owner, the Promontory Corporation, of the Building. On July 24, 2019, the Commission received a consent form, dated July 24, 2019, and signed by David L. Fleener, Secretary of the Promontory Corporation Board of Directors, the owner of the Building, consenting to the proposed landmark designation of the Building.-

IL FINDINGS OF THE COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 2-120-690 of the Municipal Code, the Commission has reviewed the entire record of proceedings on the proposed Chicago Landmark designation, including the Designation Report and all of the information on the proposed landmark designation of the Building; and

WHEREAS, the Building, completed in the spring of 1949, is one of the first International Style high-rise apartment buildings in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the Building is the work of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, an architect acknowledged internationally as a master of his craft; and

WHEREAS, the Building possesses high artistic value as evidenced by the opinions of architectural critics of its time and remains to this day a stopping point on tours by architectural enthusiasts from around the world; and

WHEREAS, the Building marks the first realization of two important design themes in Mies van der Rohe's subsequent work, the expression of the skeleton structure as an architectural element, and the use of a tripartite horizontal division in high-rise buildings; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the significance of its architect Mies van der Rohe, the Building's developer Herbert Greenwald went on to construct projects that helped shape the skyline of Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Herbert Greenwald was a pioneering developer in Chicago, one ofthe first to develop high-rise buildings after the lull in major construction in Chicago brought about by the Great Depression; and

WHEREAS, projects resulting from Herbert Greenwald's further collaboration with Mies van der Rohe include 860-880 Lake Shore Drive, the Esplanade Apartments at 900-910 North Lake Shore Drive, the 2400 Lakeview Apartments, and the Commonwealth Promenade Apartments, all in Chicago, as well as the Lafayette Park development in Detroit; and

WHEREAS, while peacefully coexisting with neighboring buildings on the skyline today, the Building was quite striking for its day. Mies van der Rohe pioneered the use of a building's structural elements and their proportions to determine its aesthetics, without relying on ornamental features as architecture traditionally had. The exposed concrete columns and beams, the use of larger expanses of glass as a major feature ofthe exterior walls, and the recessed lobby on the first floor were avant-garde for their time; and

WHEREAS, early studies for the facade included a curtain wall scheme of steel and glass, but shortages of metal soon after World War II made this infeasible. Mies van der Rohe would go on to design three more apartment buildings with an exposed concrete structural frame for the Illinois Institute of Technology. He would also go on to design several more apartment buildings in Chicago, Detroit, Baltimore, and Montreal, refining the original steel and glass curtain wall scheme; and

WHEREAS, there are many subtle design features that distinguish the Building. The exposed concrete columns on the exterior are stepped back three times over the height ofthe building to express the lessening of tlie structural loads. At the ground floor lobby, full-height glass windows are set back from the perimeter structure, emphasizing the skeletal column and beam construction. Standing in the lobby, one has unimpeded views of the lakefront to the east and a landscaped meadow to the west.

WHEREAS, within individual units, Mies van der Rohe continued to explore the components of a modern minimalist aesthetic. In-floor hot water radiant heat took the place of traditional radiators. Narrow, two-inch solid plaster partitions defined spaces while maximizing usable square footage and the flow between them. Even details as small as the flushing mechanism for toilets were designed by noted industrial designer Raymond Loewy; and

WHEREAS, the architect ofthe Building, Mies van der Rohe, is universally recognized as one of the masters of modern architecture; and

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WHEREAS, Mies van der Rohe fled Nazi Germany in 1938 and came to Chicago to direct the Department of Architecture at the Armour Institute of Technology, now the Illinois Institute of Technology (HT). In addition to developing a new curriculum for the teaching of architecture at IIT, Mies also designed a new campus plan for the University and subsequently designed multiple student and academic buildings there including the iconic Crown Hall. As an educator, Mies influenced generations of future architects whose work dominates the skylines of Chicago and cities around the world; and

WHEREAS, other seminal works by Mies van der Rohe in the Chicago area include the Farnsworth House, 860-880 Lake Shore Drive, the Federal Center complex in the heart of the Loop, and the IBM Plaza building on the Chicago River. International projects include the Seagram Building in New York City and tlie New National Gallery in Berlin; and

WHEREAS, Frank Kornacker, the structural engineer for the Building, worked closely with Mies van der Rohe on several projects and with other noted architects including Bertrand Goldberg. Komacker's notable designs in structural concrete include the Building's columns that step back over the height of the building, and the pioneering structural system of architect Goldberg's Marina City, also in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, the Building meets four (4) criteria for landmark designation set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1), (3), (4), and (5) ofthe Municipal Code; and

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WHEREAS, consistent with Section 2-120-630 oftheI Municipal Code, the BuFlding has significant historic, community, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value, the integrity of which is preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and ability to express such historic, community, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value; now, therefore,

THE COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS HEREBY:

1. Adopts the recitals, findings and statements of fact set forth in the preamble and Sections I and II hereof as the findings of the Commission; and

2. Adopts the Designation Report, as revised, and dated this October 3, 2019; and

3. Finds, based on the Designation Report and the entire record before the Commission, that the Building meets the four (4) criteria for landmark designation set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1), (3), (4), and (5) ofthe Municipal Code; and

4. Finds that the Building satisfies the "integrity" requirement set forth in Section 2-120-630 of the Municipal Code; and

5. Finds that the significant historical and architectural features ofthe Building are identified as follows:
   - All exterior elevations, including rooflines, ofthe Building; and

   - the first floor lobby, as depicted and identified on Exhibit 1, attached hereto and incorporated herein; and

6. Recommends the designation of the Building a Chicago Landmark.

This recommendation was adppled^X^vl^v ak1swc&+<^SL*^ i 8

Rafael M. Leon, Chairman Commission on Chicago Landmarks

Dated: VUJMHa 3,^01?

Exhibit 1

Significant Historical uid Architectural Features

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