

Auditorium Building



Identification

EBN	117207
Name	Auditorium Building
Alternative Name	Auditorium Theater
Construction Type	high-rise building
Complex Name	Roosevelt University
Current Status	existing [completed]

Location

Continent Name	North America	Postcode	60605
Country Name	U.S.A.	Address (as text)	430 South Michigan Avenue
State Name	Illinois	Main Address	430 South Michigan Avenue

Zone	Michigan Avenue Landmark District	Side Address	50 East Congress Parkway
Metro Area Name	Chicago-Naperville- Michigan City Combined Statistical Area	Virtual Address	451 South Wabash Avenue
City Name	Chicago	Latitude	Contact us
District (1st level)	Downtown	Longitude	Contact us
District (2nd level)	Loop		

Description

Foundation System	mat foundation	Architectural style	romanesque revival
Facade Material	granite limestone	Main Usage	university  theater/opera
Facade Color	white		

Spatial dimensions

Height (structural)	238.29 ft	Length	362.01 ft
Height (tip)	238.29 ft	Width	187.01 ft
Height (top floor)	222.77 ft	Floors (underground)	2
Height (roof)	238.29 ft	Floors (overground)	17

Years and costs

Year (construction start)	1887	Building costs	\$ 3,500,000
Year (construction end)	1890		

Features & Amenities

- One of the city's famous buildings
- City landmark

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- National landmark

Facts

- Originally built as Chicago's opera house, with a hotel on the Michigan Avenue side and offices facing Wabash and Congress Avenues.
- The building's architect Louis Sullivan moved his office into the top floor of the tower. Among his staff at the time was Frank Lloyd Wright, who assisted Sullivan with the Auditorium's interior decoration.
- The inaugural performance in the Auditorium was the opera Romeo and Juliet by Charles Gounod on 10 December 1889.
- The tower used to have a 32-foot bilevel turret on top, used as a public observation deck entrance and a signal house. The structure brought the building's height up to 82.3 m (270 feet).
- The sides of the theater contains two large arch-shaped murals by Albert Francis Fleury depicting spring and autumn, based on poems by the building's architect Louis Sullivan.
- The volume of the main auditorium is 924,000 cubic feet.
- In June 1888 the Republican National Convention was held in the theater, before the building was even completed.
- In 1952 part of the ground floor was destroyed to open a sidewalk arcade, making room for a widened Congress Avenue.
- It was named a National Historic Landmark in 1975.
- Sergei Prokofiev's opera "The Love for Three Oranges" premiered here on December 30, 1921 with the composer conducting. This is one of very few operas in the standard repertory to debut outside Europe, the others being Aida and a few Puccinis.
- The lowest three floors are faced in granite, with limestone above.
- The mosaics inside the building are estimated to include 50 million pieces of marble.
- Although the Civic Opera Building serves as Chicago's primary opera house because of its superior backstage facilities, the theater space here has more seats and even better acoustics.
- The opening scene of Frank Norris's novel The Pit takes place in the lobby of this building.
- The proscenium arch over the theater stage was painted by Charles Holloway with 45 life-size classical figures inspired by Louis Sullivan's poem "Inspiration".
- The building's foundations settled two-and-a-half feet into the boggy soil, causing parts of the ground floor to slope.
- A large vaulted room on the 10th floor overlooking Grant Park was converted from its original use as a dining room into the library for Roosevelt University.
- The initial development was a financial failure because the office portion was situated too close to the el tracks on Wabash and the hotel had only one bathroom for every ten guest rooms.

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- The building opened in 1889 and was completed in February 1890, making it the second-oldest surviving high-rise building in Chicago.

Involvement companies

Architect.....

Adler & Sullivan
430 South Michigan Avenue
60604 Chicago
U.S.A.

Additional company data available for this building

Developer	Contact us	Mechanical Engineering	Contact us
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