

CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE FOUNDATION

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Chicago Architecture Center will open August 31, 2018

Chicago's newest cultural destination will welcome public at 111 East Wacker Drive

CHICAGO (June 12, 2018) —The Chicago Architecture Foundation (CAF) announced today that it will open the Chicago Architecture Center (CAC), its new home at 111 East Wacker Drive, on Friday, August 31, 2018. The CAC is the city's newest must-see cultural destination and home to everything architecture in Chicago.

The 20,000-square-foot Center, located above the dock for the CAF River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady Cruises, will provide a unique and extraordinary Chicago experience. Visitors will discover world-famous tours, programs and exciting, new interactive exhibits that reveal the stories behind both the city's architectural marvels and breathtaking skyscrapers around the world.

"We can't wait for people to visit the CAC and experience how Chicago architects have influenced the world through their innovation and vision," said Lynn Osmond, CAF's president and CEO. "We've engineered a stimulating and immersive space where visitors can have fun discovering Chicago's groundbreaking architecture—and appreciate its profound impact on the world."

The CAC has been designed by world-renowned Chicago-based architecture firm Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture (AS+GG). The CAC features custom-designed spaces for tour orientation, design education, public programs, an award-winning store and innovative exhibits developed in partnership with museum planning and design firm, Gallagher & Associates.

One of the CAC's premier exhibits is located in the Skyscraper Gallery on the second floor, in a dramatic space with 40-foot tall windows overlooking the Chicago River and the Michigan Avenue Bridge. The exhibit, Building Tall, will be filled with supersized scale models of famous skyscrapers from Chicago and around the world including a nearly 40-foot tall model of Saudi Arabia's Jeddah Tower, designed by AS+GG, which will be the world's tallest building when completed.

The Chicago Gallery, located on the first floor, will tell the story of how Chicago became the epicenter of modern architecture. The centerpiece of the gallery is the popular Chicago Model Experience, now bigger and better than ever—expanded from 1,300 to 3,000 buildings. A film and interactive light show illuminates the model to show Chicago's early growth, rebirth after the Great Chicago Fire, first-ever skyscrapers, and today's modernist masterpieces of steel and glass. The gallery also highlights the city's most notable architects, diverse neighborhoods, unique home design and innovative current projects.

The Chicago Architecture Center is opening in a building with architectural significance. The Office of Mies van der Rohe, a pioneer of Mid-Century Modernism, designed 111 East Wacker which stands on the site of Fort Dearborn, the site of the city's founding. When the Center opens to the public, visitors will discover a unique space transformed by AS+GG.

"It's visually beautiful from the inside looking out, but also from the outside looking in," said Gordon Gill, co-founder of AS+GG Architecture. "There was a long search for the perfect location and I remember when I walked into this space, it just took my breath away. The views are spectacular. You look out and see the heart and history of Chicago. The layout is so unique. It will offer a whole variety of experiences."

The opening of the Chicago Architecture Center represents a new beginning for CAF, which has grown to become one of the largest cultural organizations in Chicago since its founding in 1966. In 2017, CAF reached nearly 690,000 people through its 85 docent-led tours, as well as exhibitions, lectures, education programs and online tools, and the annual, two-day city-wide architecture festival Open House Chicago. When the CAC opens on August 31, CAF will adopt the name Chicago Architecture Center for all its offerings and activities.

"The Chicago Architecture Center opening is a pivotal moment for our organization and the city" said John Pintozzi, chairman of CAF's board of trustees and senior vice president of Allstate Investments. "Having just celebrated the 50th anniversary of our founding, we believe the Chicago Architecture Center will enable us to better deliver on our mission to inspire people to discover why design matters."

Beginning the first week of August, the retail store and walking and bus tours will begin operations at 111 East Wacker, four weeks prior to the official public opening. A festive week-long series of celebrations for supporters and partners will inaugurate the Center prior to its official opening on August 31.

See our [Digital Media Kit](#) for images and other background information about the Chicago Architecture Center. For more information, please contact Dan O'Connell at 312.322.1134 or visit architecture.org.

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About CAF

The Chicago Architecture Foundation (CAF) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring people to discover why design matters. As an education leader in architecture and design, CAF offers tours, programs, exhibitions, field trips, curricula and online tools that are part of a dynamic learning journey for all ages. Proceeds from CAF's tours and gift store, as well as grants, sponsorships and donations, support this educational mission. For more information, visit www.architecture.org.