

**CITY OF CHICAGO
COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS**

OCTOBER 9, 2025

**RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF CHICAGO THAT
CHICAGO LANDMARK DESIGNATION BE ADOPTED FOR THE**

BANKERS BUILDING

105 W. ADAMS ST.

Docket No. 2025-08

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

Pursuant to Section 2-120-690 of the Municipal Code of the City of Chicago (the “Municipal Code”), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks (the “Commission”) has determined that the Bankers Building (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 three criteria set forth in Section 2-120-620 of the 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.*
- 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 of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.*

I. BACKGROUND

The formal landmark designation process for the Building began on June 9, 2025, 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 three of the seven 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” of the Building as:

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the Building.

Also, as part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission adopted a Designation Report, dated June 9, 2025, the most current iteration of which is dated October 9, 2025, incorporated herein and attached hereto as **Exhibit A** (the “Designation Report”).

At its regular meeting of July 10, 2025, the Commission received a report incorporated herein and attached hereto as **Exhibit B** (the “Department of Planning and Development Report”) from Ciere Boatright 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.

In letters dated July 11, 2025, the Commission officially requested consent to the proposed landmark designation from the two owners of the Building: 105 Adams Development LLC and BRE Quad IL Owner LLC.

105 Adams Development LLC submitted a form indicating its consent to landmark designation on May 15, 2025, and signed by Gabriel Martinez. The same owner resubmitted its consent form on September 4, 2025, also signed by Gabriel Martinez.

In a letter dated August 11, 2025, the second owner of the property, BRE Quad IL Owner LLC, requested a 120-day extension to respond to the Commission’s request. The Commission responded with a letter dated August 11, 2025, that the extension was granted. In a letter dated August 21, 2025, the Commission notified BRE Quad IL Owner LLC that, after careful review of the potential harm that a delay in the landmark designation would cause for the Building’s redevelopment and rehabilitation, it was retracting the extension and that the Commission requests the owner’s response to the request for consent by August 25, 2025.

August 27, 2025, BRE Quad IL Owner LLC, indicated their non-consent to the landmark designation in a form signed by Kathryn Arbogast.

Without consent from all owners of the Building, the Chicago Landmarks Ordinance requires the Commission to hold a public hearing on the Preliminary Recommendation with respect to the designation of the Building as a Chicago landmark. In letters dated August 27, 2025, the Commission notified both owners of the Building of the public hearing on the proposed designation scheduled for September 16, 2025. Notices of the time and date of the hearing were also (a) posted on a sign on the right-of-way in front of the Building, and (b) published as a legal

notice in the Chicago *Tribune*, as required by the Chicago Landmarks Ordinance. A notice was also posted on the Department of Planning and Development's web site.

II. PUBLIC HEARING

The hearing was convened, as scheduled and noticed, on September 16, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. Commission member Richard Tolliver served as Hearing Officer, assisted by Bradley Peltin, Assistant Corporation Counsel of the City's Law Department, as legal counsel to the Commission, and Dijana Cuvalo, Assistant Commissioner, Historic Preservation Division of the Department of Planning and Development. The hearing was conducted in accordance with the Commission's Rules and Regulations, specifically Article II regarding the conduct of public hearings for landmark designation.

The Commission staff's presentation recommending the proposed landmark designation was given by Matt Crawford, Coordinating Planner and author of the preliminary summary.

At the conclusion of the staff presentation, the Commission's Rules and Regulations allow property owners to question the staff's presentation /or become parties. Neither of the two owners questioned staff but both requested and were granted party status.

BRE Quad IL Owner LLC was represented by attorney Debra K. Lefler. Ms. Lefler did not take a position in favor or opposition to landmark designation of the Building, rather she renewed the owner's request to postpone the hearing by 60 days; this request was not granted.

The second owner of the Building, 105 Adams Development LLC, also requested and was granted party status. Their attorney Liz Butler made a statement in support of the landmark designation.

A third organization, CWC Capital Asset Management, LLC, has submitted a bid on BRE Quad IL Owner LLC's property in the Building. Their attorney, Mara S. Georges, requested party status. This was granted as CWC Capital Asset Management, LLC, will soon likely take title to the property. Ms. Georges stated that her client opposes landmark designation of the Building, and she renewed CWC Capital Asset Management, LLC's request to postpone the hearing; this request was not granted.

After presentations by parties, members of the public made statements.

Eleven members of the public spoke in support of landmark designation of the Building, including representatives of Abundant Housing Illinois, R2 Companies, Mid-America Carpenters

Regional Council, Toro Construction, Preservation Chicago, Chicago Loop Alliance, Chicago Central Area Committee.

No members of the public spoke in opposition to landmark designation of the Building.

The transcript (the "Hearing Transcript") from the public hearing are incorporated herein and attached hereto as **Exhibit C**.

III. 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, with its setbacks and light courts framed by wings, the form of the Building is shaped by Chicago's first zoning ordinance that was passed in 1923 which sought to balance a demand for taller office buildings while maintaining sunlight and air at street level; and

WHEREAS, the Building was built for financial services firms, and it reflects the rapid growth of the banking sector in Chicago in the 1920s; and

WHEREAS, the Building exemplifies an Art Deco skyscraper, a building design that emerged in Chicago and other American cities in the 1920s. Character-defining feature of the design include its ornament restricted to the base of the Building, flat wall planes, verticality created by piers that rise unbroken to the roof line and the Building's setbacks, which cause the Building to become narrower as it rises higher; and

WHEREAS, in addition to its Art Deco composition, the Building includes Classical Revival ornaments at its base including figures from Greek mythology and symbols such as cornucopia, swags of fruit and the caduceus; and

WHEREAS, the Building was designed by Burnham Brothers, Inc. which consisted of architects Daniel H. Burnham, Jr. (1886-1961) and Hubert Burnham (1882-1969), sons of eminent Chicago architect and planner Daniel H. Burnham and accomplished architects and civic leaders in their own right; and

WHEREAS, the Burnham Brothers designed the Carbide and Carbon Building in 1929, a designated Chicago Landmark and arguably the finest example of an Art Deco skyscraper in

Chicago in its vertical massing, geometric ornament and use of colored green and gold terra cotta; and

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

WHEREAS, consistent with Section 2-120-630 of the Municipal Code, the Building 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, II and III hereof as the findings of the Commission; and
2. Adopts the Designation Report, as revised, and dated this October 9, 2025; and
3. Finds, based on the Designation Report and the entire record before the Commission, that the Building meets three criteria for landmark designation as set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1), (4) and (5) of the 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 of the Building are identified as follows:
 - All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the Building.
6. Recommends designation of the Building a Chicago Landmark.

This recommendation was adopted unanimously (5-0).


Ernest C. Wong, Chair
Commission on Chicago Landmarks

Dated: October 9, 2025