



ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

235 Van Buren

Perkins+Will

Chicago, Illinois

April 2011

Located in the South Loop neighborhood of Downtown Chicago, 235 Van Buren is a 950,000-square-foot residential tower containing studios and one- and two-bedroom condominiums targeted for people buying their first home.

Design concept and solution:

The architects designed the building as a response to two site conditions—the densely infilled context of the Chicago “Loop” to the north, and an open space created by a freeway and major traffic interchange that also contains a small park to the south. The articulation of the two masses is distinctly different in response to these two conditions. The southern glass facade and randomly placed balconies provide a backdrop to the open space created by the traffic interchange. A ribbon of concrete frames this glass wall, undulating to define the penthouse units and providing a large-scale gesture to the expressway as well as the taller buildings to the north. The balconies express the individuality of the units within, provide a kinetic image from the freeway, and help shade the south-facing glass. The northern facade is a flush grid of rectangular openings with inset balconies. This gesture relates the building back to the historic Chicago Loop and the frame-expressed architecture of the “Chicago School.” To keep costs down and make the units more affordable, individual apartments are designed with borrowed-light bedrooms behind living spaces with 10-foot ceilings to form a loft-like living arrangement that allows the building to be wider than the standard residential tower. To reduce the effect of this extra width, the overall mass of the building is broken down by dividing the tower into two slabs. This concept also provides an urban space at the street corner that relates to the existing plaza on the opposite corner and announces the residences’ entry. The massing breakdown is further accentuated by differentiating the heights of the two shifted slabs at the top of the building.

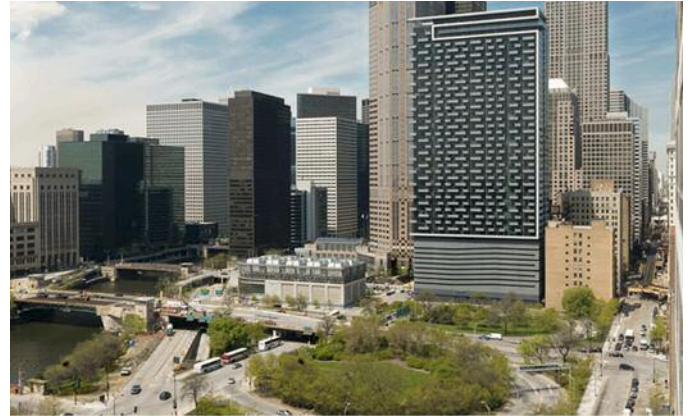
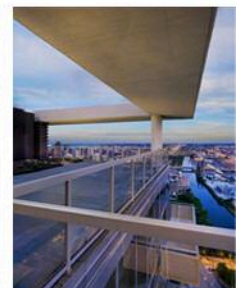
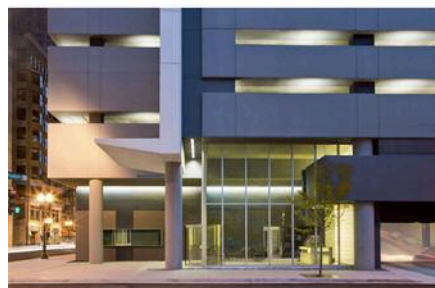
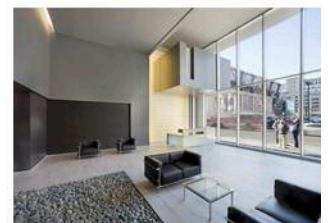
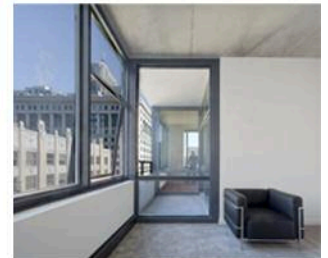
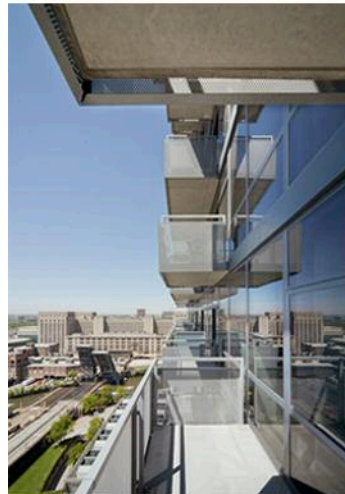
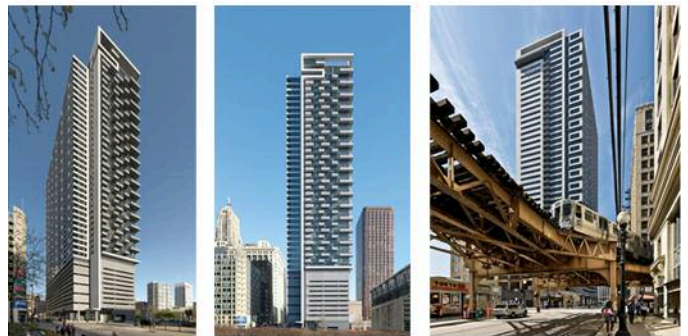


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