



40

NORTH

WEST

# LOCATION

## The Washington Block

Located at 40 North Wells, The Washington Block is a rare building that epitomizes Chicago: innovative with a touch of charm. Constructed in 1874 right after the Great Chicago Fire, the Washington Block is an architectural gem that embodies creativity with its soaring ceilings, old bank vaults, fireplaces and an impressive spiral staircase with a skylight above that floods the common corridors with natural light. Designated as a Chicago Landmark in 1997, this 5-story edifice was originally one of the tallest buildings in the city and is a rare example of isolated pier foundation construction which played a key role in the subsequent creation of skyscrapers.







### Chicago Landmark

**Washington Block**  
**Frederick and Edward Baumann,**  
**architects**  
**1873-74**

At the time of its construction, in the aftermath of the Fire of 1871, this was one of the city's tallest buildings. Its limestone facades feature ornate Victorian-style details; its lobby includes a unique curving hardwood staircase. Structurally, the building represents a rare surviving example of an isolated pier foundation, an engineering advancement that helped lead to the high-rise office building.

Designated on January 14, 1997  
 Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Commission on Chicago Landmarks



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