



An American Tour: 169



Chicago's Wrigley Building

When ground was broken for the Wrigley Building in 1920, there were no major office buildings north of the Chicago River. The Michigan Avenue Bridge, which spans the river just south of the building, was still under construction. The land was selected by chewing gum magnate William Wrigley Jr. for the headquarters of his company. The building was designed by the architectural firm of Graham, Anderson, Probst & White using the shape of the Giralda tower of Seville's Cathedral combined with French Renaissance details. The 425-foot south tower was completed in September 1921 and the north tower in May 1924. Walkways between the towers were added at the ground level and the third floor. In 1931, another walkway was added at the fourteenth floor to connect to offices of a bank in accordance with a Chicago statute concerning bank branch offices. The two towers, not including the levels below Michigan Avenue, have a combined area of 453,433 square feet.

The two towers are of differing heights, with the south tower rising to 30 stories and the north tower to 21 stories. On the south tower is a clock with faces pointing in all directions. Each face is 19 feet 7 inches in diameter. The building is clad in glazed terra-cotta, which provides its gleaming white façade. On occasion, the entire building is hand washed to preserve the terra cotta. At night, the building is brightly lit with floodlights.

The Wrigley Building was Chicago's first air-conditioned office building. If one walks through the center doors, he will find himself in a secluded park area overlooking the Chicago River. In the 1957, in the science fiction film *Beginning of the End*, giant grasshoppers attack downtown Chicago, and in one scene are shown climbing up the side of the Wrigley Building.

The Wrigley Building was sold in 2011 to a group of investors that includes Zeller Realty Group and Groupon co-founders Eric Lefkofsky and Brad Keywell. The new owners made the building more attractive to businesses by adding a Walgreens, a coffee shop, a fitness center and a nursing room for mothers. In 2017, Lego Architecture did a skyline of Chicago and the Wrigley Building was one of buildings featured. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wrigley_Building]

