



SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL  
224 SOUTH MICHIGAN AVENUE  
CHICAGO, IL 60604

## **SOM Completes Transformation of Chicago's Skydeck, Continuing Decades-Long Design Stewardship of Willis Tower**

After an extensive renovation, an immersive new exhibition and reimagined observation deck open at Chicago's Willis Tower, inviting visitors to explore the city's past, present and future.

Completed in 1973 and for 25 years the tallest building in the world, the 110-story Willis Tower has marked a major milestone in its transformation with the completion of a new Skydeck experience designed by SOM, Thinc Design, and Chicago Scenic Studios. The renovation is the latest in SOM's 50-year stewardship of Willis Tower, which includes the design of the tower itself, and the 2009 addition of the Ledge at the Skydeck, a series of glass-enclosed balconies that offer visitors the opportunity to experience the city from 103 stories above ground.

Exemplifying SOM's belief that a building's structure should inform its design, the Skydeck returns to the original vision for the building, foregrounding the tower's iconic views while showcasing its pioneering structural design through minimal design gestures and subtle finishes.

"Skydeck has always been the best way for locals and visitors to see all of Chicago, and now we have dramatically expanded and elevated the experience beyond what anyone has seen before. The new Skydeck experience celebrates hometown traditions and Chicago's storied history, with incredible views that you can't find anywhere else," said David Moore, Senior Vice President, Portfolio Director at EQ Office.

Upon entering, guests are guided through an interactive exhibition that explores how architecture has shaped Chicago's history and identity, complete with bronze models of the city's most influential buildings. A fly-through video by Squint/Opera provides an immersive tour of the skyline.

An elevator ride to the 103rd floor reveals the transformed observation deck. Interior enhancements, improved lighting and building technology upgrades allow for greatly expanded views across the city, while new interactive screens encourage visitors to learn more about Chicago's historic architecture.

"Willis Tower is synonymous with Chicago's skyline. Envisioned in our studios more than 50 years ago, its design continues to inspire us today. In creating the new Skydeck, we wanted to honor the structural clarity and simplicity of the tower's original design approach," explains Scott Duncan, SOM Design Partner. "We wanted to create a quiet backdrop for people to be fully immersed in the city's skyline and allow the view to speak for itself."

Now reopened to the public, the Skydeck was developed and led by EQ Office, the operator of Willis Tower, and constructed by RL Edward Partners and Clark Construction Group. Since 2017, Blackstone and EQ have undergone a comprehensive redevelopment of Willis Tower. As part of the renovation, the U.S. Green Building Council awarded Willis Tower LEED Platinum certification. For the Skydeck, SOM led design for architecture, interiors, structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing engineering.



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#### ABOUT SKYDECK CHICAGO AND THE LEDGE

Skydeck Chicago is the breathtaking, thrilling observatory destination atop the iconic Willis Tower. The highest observation deck in the United States, Skydeck provides views of the city spanning up to four states and 50 miles on a clear day. Recently named a Tripadvisor.com World's Top Ten Attraction, Skydeck features The Ledge, four glass floor balconies extending 4.3 feet from Willis Tower and made of three layers of half-inch thick glass laminated into one seamless unit. After undergoing an extensive transformation in 2021, Skydeck offers a one-stop, Chicago-themed experience, highlighting the rich history, culture, cuisine and architecture of the city. For more information, please visit [www.theskydeck.com](http://www.theskydeck.com) or follow us on social media at [@skydeckchicago](https://twitter.com/skydeckchicago).

#### ABOUT EQ OFFICE

EQ focuses on the experience of its 29 million square feet - how space feels, activates and performs to amplify the human experience. We're proud to work hand-in-hand with more than 1,500 customers of all sizes, from Fortune 100 companies to emerging startups, to bring humanity back to the workplace. Our diverse team of more than 200 professionals is responsible for creating inspired office environments in major cities across the country including Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle. As a U.S. office portfolio company wholly owned by Blackstone's real estate funds, we have the resources to lead the changes happening in work space. Explore your space for greatness at [www.eqoffice.com](http://www.eqoffice.com).