

860-880 LAKE SHORE DRIVE CURATIN WALLS

Architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's twin steel and glass residential towers at 860-880 Lake Shore Drive are among Chicago's most admired buildings, so when they needed repainting in 1988, Tnemec coatings were the unanimous choice to keep them looking their best. "The coatings were used on the entire exterior steel curtain wall of the buildings, including columns and window frames," according to Tnemec coating consultant Chris Wascher. "And nearly 20 years later, it still looks good."

The steel surface was prepared in accordance with SSPC-SP2 Hand Tool Cleaning and SSPC-SP3 Power Tool Cleaning to remove all loose rust and paint. Series 530 Omnithane was used as a spot primer, followed by two coats of Series 6 Tneme-Cryl, a water-based acrylic emulsion, applied at 2.0 to 3.0 mils DFT. "The color was charcoal black, which was Mies's trademark – the flatter the better," Wascher noted. "The glass was not removed during the painting, so the coatings were all roller and brush applied." Approximately 800 gallons of coatings were needed to complete the project.

In the early 1950s, the Lake Shore Drive towers with their steel and glass exteriors were a dramatic shift away from the more conventional residential brick apartment buildings of that time. In his book, Mies van der Rohe, architect and author A. James Speyer described the identical 26-story towers as "a pioneer curtain-wall expression as well as a fulfillment of the all-glass skyscraper schemes proposed by Mies three decades earlier."

According to Paul Gapp, former architectural editor for the Chicago Tribune, "Chicagoans called Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's twin 26-story apartment towers the 'glass houses' when they were built between 1948 and 1951. His lake front tour de force influenced architects everywhere and in this respect eventually helped change the look of virtually every American city."

In 1976, the Lake Shore towers received the American Institute of Architects 25 Year Award presented to significant projects that have "withstood the test of time." And in 1996, the buildings were designated Chicago Landmarks. A statement by The Commission on Chicago Landmarks reads: "These twin apartment towers set the standard by which all subsequent glass-and-steel high-rises are judged... No other design by this world-famous architect had so immediate or so strong an impact. They are featured in every book on modern architecture, and they are among the best known of the city's post-World War II architecture."

FEATURED PRODUCTS

Series 6 Tneme-Cryl
Series 530 Omnithane



PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Location
Chicago, Illinois

Project Completion Date
September 1988

Owner
Sudler-Marling, Inc. - Chicago, Illinois

Design Architect
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe - Chicago, Illinois

Field Applicator
Bobbe & Co. - Chicago, Illinois

Series 6 Tneme-Cryl, a water-based acrylic emulsion in a charcoal black color, protects the entire exterior steel curtain wall of the towers at 860-880 Lake Shore Drive in Chicago, Illinois.

