Standard Oil/ BP America HQ/ 200 Public Square

Cleveland, OH

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200 Public Square (publicly known as the Sohio Building, Standard Oil Building, the BP America Building, BP America Tower, BP Tower, or BP Building) is the third-tallest skyscraper in Cleveland, Ohio. Located on the east side of Public Square in Downtown Cleveland, the building rises 45 stories and 658 ft and provides 1.2 million square feet of office space. The building is now Cleveland's regional headquarters for Huntington Bancshares.

Standard Oil Co. Inc. was established in 1870 by John D. Rockefeller as an oil producing, refining and transportation company, and until 1911, was one of the largest multinational corporations in the world. Ruled a monopoly by the US Supreme Court, SOHIO remained a leader in the production and distribution of fuel, lubricants and petrochemicals, at one point employing 60,000 people.

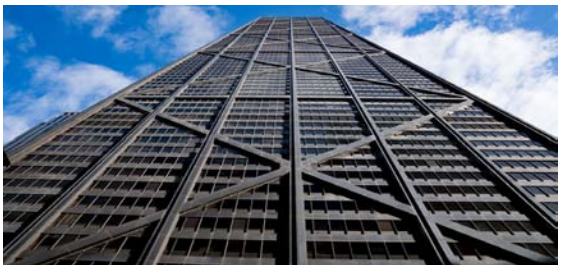
In November 1981, Standard Oil of Ohio (SOHIO) announced plans to build a headquarters skyscraper on Public Square. Initially, it was supposed to surpass the Terminal Tower in height, but city officials insisted that the Terminal Tower remain the city's tallest building. The Sohio Building was designed by Gyo Obata of Hellmuth, Obata and Kassabaum and angled in plan like a boomerang to be parallel to both Euclid and Superior Avenues.

Obata's original design presented for the tower was a sophomoric mass of ordinary rectangular planes that reflected no respect for the city, the site, the neighboring buildings or the state of architecture at the time.

As the 1970's transitioned into the 1980's, the boring unarticulated boxy high-rises of the '70's – like Cleveland's Diamond Shamrock Building, Bond Court Tower, National City Center, etc.- were no longer good enough for speculative high-rise buildings. And corporate headquarters buildings were expected then - and today - to achieve even higher levels of architectural excellence.

The John Hancock Tower in Chicago - now 875 North Michigan Ave. - by Bruce Graham of SOM and structural engineer Fazlur Kahn is an iconic 100-story 1128-foot high tapered high-rise with its stiffening cross bracing revealed in its articulated exterior which was completed in 1969.

Above: Standard Oil/ BP America/ 200 Public Square Tower
Below: Hancock Tower/ 875 N. Michigan Ave. Tower, Chicago
Below Right: Hancock Tower/ 200 Clarendon, Boston
Bottom: Hancock Chicago cross-bracing facade



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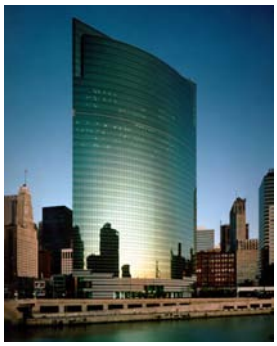
Above left: Pennzoil Place, Houston; Philip Johnson
Above right: Federal Reserve Bank, Boston; Hugh Stubbins
Below left: 333 Wacker Dr., Chicago; Kohn Pederson Fox
Below right: 900 Michigan Ave., Chicago; Kohn Pederson Fox
Middle left: 388 Market St., San Francisco; SOM
Middle right: CNG Tower, Pittsburgh; Kohn Pederson Fox
Bottom left: Bank of China Tower, Hong Kong; Pei Cobb Freed & Partners



The design by Henry Cobb of I. M. Pei's office for the headquarters of the John Hancock Insurance Company at Copley Square in Boston is also a significant architectural precedent to the BP America Tower by HOK. The 60-story minimalist parallelogram Hancock tower has weathered its original reflective glass problems that delayed opening from 1971 to 1976. Following its sale in 2015, it is now known as 200 Clarendon. Cobb deftly intended the tower as a scaleless jewel-like glass prism to reflect the landmark H. H. Richardson Trinity Church without casting shadows on it and create a dynamic Copley Plaza as the city's great public space.

Philip Johnson's Pennzoil Place in Houston (1975) presented two identical 491' trapezoidal dark bronze glass towers with a glass pyramid atrium joining them at grade. Pennzoil Place was also considered postmodern at the time because it broke with the tradition of Mies van der Rohe's orthogonal modernist glass box.

Boston's Federal Reserve Bank by Hugh Stubbins Jr. was completed in 1974 at 614 feet and 32 floors. The aluminum-skinned high-rise features cores at each end of the building with the office floors suspended from a 140-foot bridge hung between the cores.

By 1980, articulated postmodern design was making its way even into high-rises. After their 333 Wacker Drive tower on the Chicago River with its animated stone base and curving glass top, 35 floors and 1,000,000 square feet, KPF's 900 Michigan Avenue in Chicago was perhaps the most postmodern of the early 1980 towers. SOM's mixed-use 388 Market Street tower in San Francisco reflected a sweeping curve at one end of its triangular plan and a tiny radiused corner at its point to create a distinctive presence at its intersection. KPF's CNG Tower (1984-1987) brought a richly articulated form of multiple granite elements and an arched top to the Pittsburgh skyline in an homage to the city's bridges.

I.M. Pei's Bank of China Tower (1982-1989) was the first supertall skyscraper outside the US at 1033/1205 feet and 72 stories. The triangular steel framework transfers the loads to supercolumns at the building's four corners. When the bank released the building's design, Pei was criticized for the diagonal steel bracing which in some portions created X's – which is a negative symbol in Chinese culture. As the tower is the only major building in Hong Kong to bypass conferring with feng shui masters, Pei modified the design before construction.

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KPF's Eight Penn Center in Philadelphia (1979-1981) presented two interlocking masses clad in contrasting materials. With punched windows in concrete on two sides and an articulated glass curtainwall with dramatic rounded corners, the glass gave the tower transparency and a human scale at the street with a strong cantilever at the bank entry.

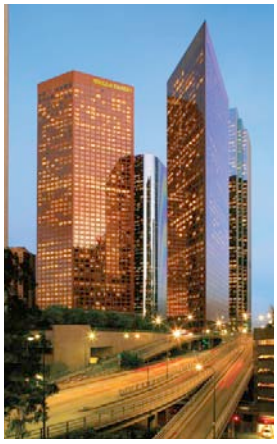
Michael Graves' over-the-top postmodern Portland Building for government offices in Oregon was in design and under construction at the same time HOK was working on the BP tower. Also concurrent with Obata's efforts were the SOM Wells Fargo Center towers (originally called Crocker Center N & S) in Los Angeles with its two trapezoidal tower of 45 and 54 floors respectively clad in the same pink granite as BP tower.

Although the Wells Fargo Towers reflect none of the metaphorical attributes conventionally ascribed to Post-Modernism, LA art, architecture and culture critic Fredric Jameson used Skidmore, Owings and Merrill's Crocker Bank Center - as it was then named - as an example of what he saw as Postmodern architecture's "depthlessness:"

"Nor is this depthlessness merely metaphorical: it can be experienced physically and literally by anyone who, mounting what used to be Raymond Chandler's Beacon Hill from the great Chicano markets on Broadway and 4th St. in downtown Los Angeles, suddenly confronts the great free-standing wall of the Crocker Bank Center (Skidmore, Owings and Merrill) -- a surface which seems to be unsupported by any volume, or whose putative volume (rectangular, trapezoidal?) is ocularly quite undecidable."

"This great sheet of windows, with its gravity-defying two-dimensionality, momentarily transforms the solid ground on which we climb into the contents of a stereopticon, pasteboard shapes profiling themselves here and there around us. From all sides, the visual effect is the same: as fateful as the great monolith in Kubrick's 2001 which confronts its viewers like an enigmatic destiny, a call to evolutionary mutation. If this new multinational downtown ... effectively abolished the older ruined city fabric which it violently replaced, cannot something similar be said about the way in which this strange new surface in its own peremptory way renders our older systems of

Above left: Eight Penn Center, Philadelphia; Kohn Pederson Fox
Above right: Portland Building; Michael Graves
Below left: Wells Fargo Center/ Crocker Center, Los Angeles; SOM
Below right: One Worldwide Plaza, New York; SOM
Bottom left: Olympia Center, Chicago; SOM
Bottom right: 333 Bush St. Tower, San Francisco; SOM



Above: Four Leaf Towers, Houston; Cesar Pelli
Middle: AT&T/ Sony Center, New York; Philip Johnson Bottom: Humana Building, Louisville; Michael Graves

perception of the city somehow archaic and aimless, without offering another in their place (1984)?"

SOM's One Worldwide Plaza in New York is a 50-story postmodern tower with three hues of brick and a copper pyramidal metal roof. Only SOM's boring cereal box of Swedish granite – Olympia Centre - in Chicago is as lacking in character as Obata's original design for Standard Oil's world HQ. And Olympia Centre manages its height by swelling its floor plates at its lower levels and widening its window openings as it reaches for the sky.

In fact, Obata's revised design for Standard Oil's HQ bears a striking resemblance to SOM's 333 Bush St. Tower in San Francisco with its mauve granite exterior, stepback corners and wedding cake setbacks at its top.

Even Cesar Pelli's pair of Four Leaf Towers in Houston had an articulated cap and a mix of glass tints to animate the large flat elevations of the 40-story residential towers.

Even the least creative efforts by Obata's peers in the early 1980's were delivering works with varied shapes and textural manipulations of structures of similar size, taking high-rise design to the next level. And it must be noted that with the exception of the Boston Federal Reserve Bank and Portland Building by Graves, the other projects noted for comparison were all speculative projects with market-driven cost constraints, while Obata's project was a world headquarters with higher standards and more abundant resources to enable a high commitment to design excellence, which Obata failed to provide.

Philip Johnson's 37-floor AT&T Building (then Sony Plaza, now 550 Madison Ave.,1980-1984) is America's most well-known postmodern building for its resemblance to a Chippendale clock. Michael Graves' Humana Building in Louisville followed (1982-1985) and is also a richly articulated postmodern tower with a lower loggia and a pink granite facade. Its sloping top and open observation deck has spurred the building's nickname as "the Milk Carton."

I am not suggesting that these other high-rise projects all achieved design excellence. Indeed, Mark Lamster's recent biography of Philip Johnson fairly observes that Johnson's postmodern period "helped reshape the urban America skyline," producing "an architecture of staggeringly indelicate historical detailing spalled onto leaden structures that made negative contributions to civic space." My point is that many other architects made earnest efforts and successfully reshaped urban skylines with new forms and shapes and that Obata did

not.

Perhaps the most significant high-rise design published before Obata began his work for Standard Oil was Sir Norman Foster's Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank (HKSB) Center in Hong Kong. Designed in 1978 and completed in 1985, its 44 floors contain almost exactly the same amount of space as the BP tower. But the bank's request of Foster for a new kind of headquarters that would enhance the health and well-being of their staff compelled Foster to create a design that allowed significant natural daylight for all. So he arranged flexible floorplates around a stack of central atrium volumes and located the building's structural frame on the outside of the building.

Despite the many new trends in high-rise design at the time Obata was retained, his work for Standard Oil did not reflect an awareness or appreciation for the any of the many new approaches and refinement dozens of other firms were bringing to the high-rise marketplace. It is also entirely possible that SOHIO asked Obata for nothing more than a decent building with conventional corner offices for its chiefs and large unobstructed floorplates for their open plan seas of workstations for their Indians.

HOK was formed in 1955 in St. Louis, with Gyo Obata, George Hellmuth and George Kassabaum as founding partners. Originally, the firm designed educational facilities. In 1973, HOK acquired the New York firm of Kahn & Jacobs, known for their design of many New York skyscrapers. It is unclear if Obata had designed a high-rise before putting his hand to the Standard Oil HQ in Cleveland.

Obata's tower in Cleveland is a weak attempt at a combination of the noble and the institutional, similar in concept to Philip Johnson's 35-story AT&T Building in New York, which reaches a height of 635 feet. Obata's two-tone granite exterior, his vertical emphasis to give the tower a height he wanted - but dared not impose for fear of topping Terminal Tower, its marble and granite interior areas and its stepbacks in plan and elevation attempt to give the building a powerful presence.

But it lacks the presence it could have had because it lacks grace and a successful embrace of Public Square. It is not that Obata's tower lacks mass. The floor plates are large, intended to efficiently accommodate Standard Oil's open plan workstation personnel, with the many corners intended for offices for managers and executives.

But unlike AT&T, in Obata's tower, one is not compelled to

Above: Hong Kong Shanghai Bank, Hong Kong; Sir Norman Foster
below: Hong Kong Shanghai Bank atrium; Sir Norman Foster

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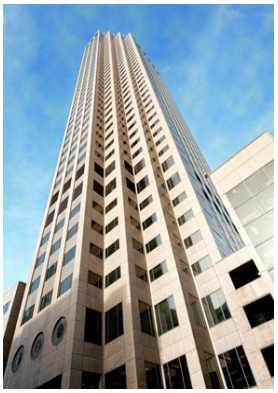
Above left: Standard Oil/ BP America/ 200 Public Square Tower
Above right: HOK's 1st (left) and 2nd (right) design renderings for Sohio Tower
Below left: BP America Tower from Public Square
Below right: BP America Tower corners
Below Middle left: Claes Olderburg's BP America rendering with proposed Free Stamp sculpture
Below Middle right: BP Tower atrium from above
Below Bottom: BP Tower Public Square entry



give thought to the nature of space, the nature of light or the nature of stone for the BP Building is flat. For all of its corners and its darkened granite verticals at its windows between the narrowly spaced columns – only 15' on center, the building does not offer any needed articulation of its bulk.

Unlike AT&T, the building has no open colonnades despite the fact that its ground floor contains limited retail space and is largely circulation space to pull users in to access the escalators to ascend to the second level to access passenger elevators to the tower's office floors. Such a gesture would have softened the mass and been a welcome accommodation to pedestrians in a climate known for harsh winters.

The rosy granites of the entire exterior are quality, timeless materials that recall the Federal Reserve Bank's Tennessee Pink marble a block away. But at BP, Obata polished the stone to a metal-like finish that makes the building's presence seem cold and unwelcoming. As such, the building lacks sufficient texture to fit gracefully into its context with its neighbors - the grey honed granite of the Federal Courthouse and Public Library to the north, the terra cotta May Company and masonry Park Building to the south, the Arcade to the east and the limestone Terminal Tower to the west.

There is no question that Obata's tower is from another time than its neighbors, but the façade's flat surfaces and dark windows attempt to impart a classical order - but only in the most superficial and trite way.

Obata wanted to design a building taller than Terminal Tower but 'community leaders' pushed back, asking Standard Oil and Obata to respect the city's beloved architectural symbol. Obata's first design featured a wide flat stepped mass stretching from Euclid to Superior - a primitive and crude design. At that time, for such a large and important project, we expected more from sophomore architecture students and we expect far more from them today. His second design, featuring the same simple layering of the facades and the step back of those layers at the top, got built.

One aspect of Obata's tower that reflects the second-rate detailing of the envelope by Obata and HOK are the corners. It is customary in managing the design of the corner columns and windows so that each inside corner brings the right angles of the window jambs together in a flush condition, so that each window

reflects its adjacent surface, which serves to lighten the appearance of the mass of the building. And if there was ever a building whose mass could have benefitted from such a sensitivity, it was Obata's tower. But the HOK team was unable to finesse the details and instead delivered small stone returns at the jambs, keeping the window frames and glass apart with small granite bands separating them.

Entry Sequence:

The tower has four entry points, all of which require one to move from the ground floor up escalators to the second floor where a central security station between elevator banks enables access to the passenger elevator banks: from the garage, from Euclid Ave. and Superior Ave., and off of Public Square.

The entry off of Public Square is particularly underwhelming. Obata failed to make the building's 80' high atrium an extension of Public Square or connect the atrium with the Square in a number of ways:

1. The actual entry is an under-scaled quartet of polished brass revolving doors at grade pushed into the west curtainwall. The granite plaza in front of the building had evidenced mostly broken slabs for many years with no signs of repair or replacement, making one's first tactile impression upon approaching the entry a blemished one.

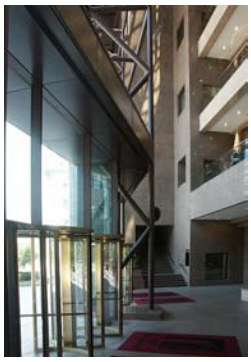
2. The west curtainwall of the atrium is heavily tinted bronze glass, making any view into the atrium essentially impossible until after dark, so the building's ceremonial front door is unwelcoming.

3. The atrium's U-shaped crab-claw plan of the its upper office floors results in bridges connecting the north and south sides of the chamber immediately overhead upon entry behind a painted steel space frame that supports the glass curtainwall. The connecting corridors, necessary for practical reasons, are granite-clad and visually heavy, further obscuring visibility into and out of the atrium.

4. The dark brown space frames seem inappropriate to the building as they further obscure visibility into and out of the atrium. Narrow deep columns would have been more appropriate and less obtrusive.

5. Once one navigates the awkward entry volumes of a tall vertical sliver of volume upon entry, and proceeds

Above: Tower entry from Public Square
Below left: Atrium inside Public Square Entry
Below right: Atrium curtainwall truss
Middle left: Atrium bridges
Middle right: Atrium opening to Public square
Bottom: Atrium connection to Tower



Left Above, Clockwise:
1. BP Tower atrium
2. BP Tower entry from Public Square
3. BP Tower atrium center aisle
4. BP Tower atrium original view to Public Square
5. BP Tower atrium plantings
6. BP Tower connection to atrium
7. BP Tower atrium connection to Tower
8. BP Tower atrium with plantings

under the compression of the overhead walkways, only then does one experience the atrium's volume, which presents more vertical bands of granite emphasizing the building's structural columns and a white bowed tube truss at its roof to support the skylights. The thin size of the truss tubes and their white color are out of character with the heavy masculinity of Obata's vertical banding of the darker granite and the series of fake oculus elements at the top of the atrium's tower wall.

6. On the exterior, the west curtainwall incorporates an arched element of even darker glass at its top. The arch did not appear in either of Obata's original designs and was likely added when the bowed truss supporting the atrium skylights was chosen to frame the atrium roof. The arch is out of place with all of the rigorously orthogonal forms of the tower and atrium masses.

As a result, Obata's atrium orientation to Public Square is a tease and not a legitimate invitation or gift of 'view' to atrium inhabitants to appreciate the Soldiers and Sailors Monument across the street or Terminal Tower beyond.

The Atrium:

Originally, Obata's atrium featured formal planting beds with circular seating areas, which precluded the use of the atrium as anything other than a tall vestibule to pass through since events could not be staged around the water features and planters. Circulation was planned along each side of the atrium next to retail occupancies with a narrow path down the center around a series of water features.

However, if one chose the center path, they encountered at the tower the change in grade between the Euclid Ave. and Public Square entries and a water curtain that initially obscures a view into the lobby to enable navigation. One must then detour to either side to enter the tower's pre-lobby.

The atrium's original rigid planter/ seating elements intentionally precluded the atrium space from functioning as a meaningful social asset for the tower's 3500 occupants or as an extension of the building's second floor cafeteria. A handful of small café tables were added over time.

The atrium design employs a lighter accent stone which appears to be a Breccia Perniche marble on planters and as the infill elements on the atrium walls between Obata's use of the eggplant-colored granite and the floor of the atrium. With all stone surfaces polished, the atrium is a cold space

with reflections from the daylight from above and the west curtainwall. It also results in a space with a strong color saturation that feels excessively aggressive. Perhaps like the blue plate special, Standard Oil did not want employees or guests lingering long in its 'public' space that really was not public in the sense it could and should have been an asset for occupants and the community.

A recent long-overdue renovation attempted to cure some of the atrium's ills. The talented Ron Reed of WRL/ DLR Group was charged to make a more flexible and inviting space out of the atrium. Unfortunately, Reed was severely handicapped by a monstrous intrusion. The landlord in negotiating a new tenant for the north restaurant space, agreed to allow the new steak house tenant to capture roughly a third of the atrium for its additional seating area, and capture the space above for its mechanical equipment.

So while Reed replaced the eggplant granite flooring and planters with a black and white stone floor, the restaurant mass is clad in a polished metal that respects one of Obata's poor decisions on materiality. The metal elements in the complex have two finishes: exterior aluminum windows are framed in a burgundy painted finish. Other metals – hardware and handrails are polished brass throughout. The yellow hue of the polished brass is a poor compliment to the magenta-based hues of the relentless stones in the building. Yellow and pink are simply not complimentary.

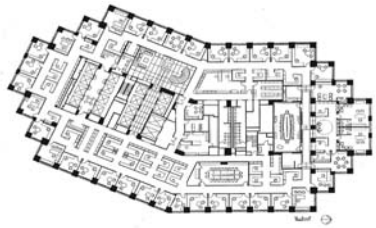
So the restaurant's intrusion and occupation of the atrium is a massive polished brass turd on its sides and roof, which provides even more reflectivity in a space that needed less. Reed's token seating areas feature fun red leather seating which allow for some flexibility to stage small events. The new stone floor abruptly crashes into the curving water feature at the east end of the atrium in an arbitrary and unresolved manner, unusual for a Reed project.

Building Lobby:

The segue from entries and atrium to the building lobby is a disappointment. The polished stone walls and granite floors with token seating elements reflect the design decision that these large areas are for circulation only. The low coffered drywall ceilings with indirect fluorescent lighting are not pleasant or conducive to interaction. The polished brass rails on the jambs of the escalators produce glaring reflections. For security purposes, one must loop completely around the elevator banks to be admitted to ascend to workplace floors above. It appears that these areas are un-designed, given a

Left Above, Clockwise:
1. 200 Public Square atrium after Renovation
2. 200 Public Square atrium after renovation
3, 200 Public square atrium after Renovation
4. 200 Public Square Superior Foyer

Left Above, Clockwise:
1. 200 Public Square Tower Lobby
2. PolyOne Corporation World HQ Floor Plan
3. PolyOne Corp. HQ Sr. Manager. Office
4. PolyOne Corp. HQ Open Plan Office



lack of articulation, lighting design or finesse apart from the relentless polished stone walls.

Unlike other Class A and B buildings (Key Tower, Ohio Savings Plaza, Fifth Third Tower, etc.), 200 Public Square has not installed electronic security gates and removed the barriers to the elevator banks from the west side of the tower, which would make access and egress far more convenient, direct and safe for occupants and guests, though it would require staff monitoring at north and south ends of the second level lobby.

Floorplates:

Obata made the floors column-free by using large exterior columns at 15′ centers. This is a decision that failed to anticipate occupancy by conventional workplace tenants whose offices for managers are typically 10′ x 12.′ Obata also chose to stiffen the columns and give them a required fire rating by encasing them in concrete. This made the columns enormous in comparison with other buildings of similar height.

The large open floors have cellular floor ducts in the floor to provide power and telephone to open plan workstations. But as the Internet emerged and the wiring of open plan workplace environments intensified, tenants abandoned the system because the volume of wires need at workstation cluster panel feeds overwhelmed the size of the ducts Obata incorporated.

Obata's interior core walls were all painted a buttery hue with a wall-mounted indirect light cove and a textured surface on walls. As more and more employees and tenants complained that the texture caused skin and nylon abrasions and runs, the texture was sanded off.

Originally, the interiors for Standard Oil were ordinary and uninspired offices and seas of Steelcase 'tan value 2' furniture systems with 63″ high panels. The experience was uninspired from a prominent Chicago interior design firm.

We were fortunate to have executed a number of high end corporate workplace interiors projects in the building, but we were forced to shape our clients' space standards to Obata's building geometry and his enormous columns instead of the other way around. For the **PolyOne Corporation World Headquarters**, we placed senior managers are group executives in offices at the perimeter and modulated their office sizes with the window mullions

and columns to eliminate offices with the large columns obstructing the middle of an office, which compromised credenza space needed by managers.

We provided every staff person with custom built-in furniture that was integrated into the corridor's textured glass wall so daylight was transmitted to the entire interior zone, occupied by staff in custom English Sycamore workstations. Staff offices were all provided with round conference tables to help transform a traditional culture to a more egalitarian and collaborative organization were spontaneous interactions were encouraged.

For **McKinsey & Company Inc.**'s regional office, with a consultant staff that spends much of its time away from the office with clients at their locations, we developed slender long offices that were 7'-2" x 14' two-person offices, paired in each structural bay. Senior manager, principal and partner offices were located in the setbacks at the building's corners. Conference and partner offices were all double the size of the paired two-person offices so changes in head count or personnel mix could be easily and quickly addressed in a cost-effective manner.

To make the narrow offices work effectively, we rendered the end of the wall between offices in clear glass as it approached the exterior windows so the perceived width of the office and view corridor to the exterior was increased and maximized. We also utilized translucent glass on the face of custom overhead storage elements so the eye went beyond the cabinet face and again perceived a greater width than the physical space delivered.

The fronts of all offices were full-height clear and textured glass walls and doors for visual privacy and daylight transmission to interior zones of support staff, meeting and support areas. These design features added significantly to the cost of developing first-rate workplace spaces within Obata's tower.

Conclusion:

Obata's tower is a missed opportunity for a landmark work of architecture. It is a massive and sturdy building, lacking in care with regard to its materiality, articulation and integration with its context. The beloved Williamson (George B. Post, 1900) and Cuyahoga Buildings

Left Above, Clockwise:
1. PolyOne Corp. HQ Executive Office
2. McKinsey & Co., Inc. Corridor
3. McKinsey & Co., Inc. Consultant Office
4. McKinsey & Co., Inc. Corridor
5. McKinsey & Co., Inc. Partner Office

Left Above, Clockwise:
1. Demolition of the Cuyahoga & Williamson Buildings
2. 200 Public Square & Terminal Tower
3. 200 Public Square
4. 200 Public Square from east

(Burnham & Root, 1892) were demolished to make way for the BP tower.

The local officials who demanded Obata keep the height of his tower (658 feet) below that of Terminal Tower deserve a healthy share of the blame for the resulting brutish nature of the tower, particularly since the slightly larger 57-story neighboring Key Tower looms to 947 feet.

The slender wedding cake Terminal Tower stretches its 52 floors to its upper roof of 709 feet. The lack of design awareness of those who weighed in at the time of the BP Tower's original design failed to grasp that the width and mass of Obata's compromise would significantly overwhelm the slender mass of Terminal Tower whose upper floors that are under 7,000 square feet, while Obata's floor plates are 28,000 sf until the setbacks of his wedding cake reach the sky. A model of Public Square with both towers illustrated would have facilitated an informed understanding and should have been demanded.

As a symbol, the masculine and massive bulk of Obata's composition could be interpreted as representing the strength and permanence of Standard Oil – which would disappear within two years of its occupancy. The vertical banding of contrasting tones of granite to suggest a classical order roots the building's coded message in the past, not the future, which regrettably reflects the conservative values of the city and its original owner.

Given the spirited evolution in high-rise design in the US and world at the time Obata was charged with the design of the project, the results can only be seen as a major disappointment, with dozens of speculative projects everywhere producing far more exciting and artful results.

Completed in 1985, the tower was renamed in 1987 after British Petroleum purchased Standard Oil. When BP purchased Chicago-based Amoco in 1998, the company's headquarters was moved to Chicago, 101 years after John D. Rockefeller had retired as Standard Oil's chairman, and the building has existed as a successful multi-tenant office building since as 200 Public Square under its third owner.