

BUILD WITH STRENGTH

CONCRETE CASE STUDY: VALUE

MERCHANDISE MART

222 Merchandise Mart Plaza, Chicago, IL 60654

Completed: 1930

Size: 4,000,000 sq. ft.

Height: 340 ft

Owner: Vornado Realty Trust

Floors: 18 base, 25 tower

Architect: Graham, Anderson, Probst and White



HISTORY (STILL) AT WORK.

Built nearly a century ago, Merchandise Mart (the Mart) revolutionized American commerce, and still plays an important role in it today. Once considered the world's largest building, the Mart still holds the title of world's largest commercial building and the largest wholesale design center. Spanning two city blocks, The Mart still serves as one of Chicago's top international business locations with nearly 25,000 visitors a day.

01. A project of sheer magnitude.

A floor area of four million square feet requires a lot of concrete—four million cubic yards worth to be exact.

02. A solid structure.

The building is made of structural steel columns and beams encased with concrete fireproofing with reinforced concrete joists. The foundation is supported by 458 reinforced concrete caissons, sunk between 80 to 100 feet below ground.

03. Meeting the needs of today.

The Mart has served numerous purposes, from its original use for wholesale retailers, to government offices during World War II, to its current use as open office space for the next generation of office workers.

04. Energy efficient before its time.

The Mart received LEED Gold certification in 2013. Concrete's thermal mass properties help make the building incredibly energy efficient.

05. Job creator during the Great Depression.

Nearly 2,500 men were continuously employed during the construction project, which lasted into the start of the Great Depression.