

# Union Carbide Building

complete scale model

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270 Park Avenue, New York

1:2000 Scale

This International-Style office building by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill was designed by Natalie de Blois and Gordon Bunshaft. The 700-foot skyscraper was completed in 1961 as the headquarters of Union Carbide Corporation.

The tower is built directly over the busy train lines leading to Grand Central Terminal. Support columns are placed between the tracks and engineered to withstand the vibrations of over 500 trains per day.

Because there is no space for a basement mechanical area, elevator access was placed on the second floor in a 25-foot tall glass-walled entrance lobby.

A 13-story annex at the rear of the building houses delivery access, a company cafeteria, and other support functions.

The building has changed names several times with changes in ownership, and is now known as simply 270 Park Avenue.

The current owner JP Morgan Chase spent millions in 2012 upgrading the energy efficiency of the aging building in the largest ever LEED Platinum renovation.

Rather than enjoying these long-term operational savings, the banking giant suddenly announced in 2018 its intention to demolish the building and replace it with a 1200-foot corporate headquarters which could house 15,000 employees. When the plan is completed, it will be the tallest skyscraper ever disassembled.

When it was new, the modern building set back from the street on a small plaza would have provided a refreshing contrast of crisp orderly steel and clear glass to its older, fussier brick and terracotta neighbors. Since then so many similar, if less-elegant, modernist boxes have been built around it that the building is easily ignored and unappreciated. Whether the building is worth preserving has provoked a heated debate, but it is not likely to be saved.

