

Salesforce Tower Chicago (Wolf Point South)

Quiet Within a High-Rise Landmark

VISION

Design a high-performance office tower that delivers acoustic comfort within a dense urban and riverfront environment.

PARTNERSHIP

Collaborate with developer and architect to integrate acoustic strategies within core and shell design for a trophy office tower.

VALUE-ADD

Façade attenuation and vibration control solutions that mitigate urban noise and support tenant comfort across all occupied floors.

DEVELOPER

Hines

ARCHITECT

Pelli Clarke & Partners

ACOUSTICS

Trinity Consultants

Salesforce Tower Chicago, also known as Wolf Point South, is a 60-story, 1.5 million-square-foot office tower located at the confluence of the Chicago River's North, South, and Main branches. Developed by Hines in partnership with Joseph P. Kennedy Enterprises and designed by Pelli Clarke & Partners, it represents the final phase of the Wolf Point Master Plan, a 14-year mixed-use development that transformed a historically underutilized riverfront site into one of the most prominent commercial addresses in Chicago. Trinity Consultants served as acoustic consultant for the core and shell design of the South Tower, with scope focused on façade performance and interior sound separation.

The building's location presents an inherently demanding acoustic environment. Positioned at the convergence of the Chicago River's three branches, the tower is adjacent to active waterway traffic, elevated rail infrastructure, and the dense urban noise of the Chicago Loop. At the same time, the building's program includes a full suite of amenities, among them a fitness center, conference center, wellness rooms, and tenant lounges with riverfront balconies, that generate their own internal acoustic conditions requiring careful management. Trinity Consultants, a leading global consulting firm, addressed both dimensions of that acoustic picture as part of the core and shell design process.

VISION

Wolf Point has occupied a unique position in Chicago's civic geography since the city's earliest commercial settlements. Sitting where the North, South, and Main branches of the Chicago River converge just west of the Loop, it served as a hub of trade and transit in the 19th century before falling into a long period of disuse. The Wolf Point Master Plan, developed by Hines and designed throughout by Pelli Clarke & Partners, reimagined the four-acre site as a mixed-use development anchored by three towers. The residential West and East towers were followed by the South Tower, Salesforce Tower Chicago, which at 60 stories and 1.5 million square feet is the tallest of the three and the final piece of the master plan. The tower is home to Salesforce's regional headquarters and offers 24,000 to 25,000 square feet of column-free, floor-to-ceiling glass floor plates designed to support a modern, flexible working environment.

Hines' vision for the tower was a building that would set a standard for commercial office in Chicago: highly amenitized, rigorously detailed, and capable of attracting the most demanding tenants. Salesforce Tower's program includes a fitness center with locker rooms and showers, a conference center, wellness rooms, tenant lounges positioned at the water's edge, and approximately 25,000 square feet of retail and dining at grade and along the riverwalk. Delivering on the promise of a high-quality acoustic environment within this building required acoustic input to be embedded in the core and shell design from the outset, accounting for the tower's exposed riverfront position and the proximity of its amenity program to occupied office floors.

PARTNERSHIP

Trinity Consultants worked directly with Hines and Pelli Clarke & Partners on the core and shell design of the South Tower, with acoustic input coordinated alongside the architectural and mechanical systems that define the building's performance envelope. On a project of this scale and profile, acoustic criteria had to be established in step with the curtain wall and structural design process, not retrofitted after those systems were set. Coordination with Pelli Clarke & Partners focused on ensuring that façade specifications, floor assembly details, and spatial planning for amenity areas all reflected acoustic performance requirements in a way that was integrated with, rather than appended to, the overall design.

The tower's program created a range of internal acoustic interactions that required careful planning at the design stage. The fitness center and conference center, positioned to take advantage of the building's lower floors and their adjacency to the riverwalk, introduce both impact noise and amplified speech into a structural system that extends the full height of the building. Addressing those interactions required collaboration between the acoustic, structural, and architectural teams to identify floor and wall assembly solutions that could manage vibration and airborne sound transmission between occupied areas. That coordination was ongoing through the design development and construction document phases.

VALUE-ADD

The tower's riverfront position exposes the façade to a combination of low-frequency noise sources, principally river traffic and the elevated rail infrastructure of the nearby Chicago L, that are particularly difficult to attenuate with conventional glazing. Trinity Consultants developed façade attenuation recommendations that addressed those low-frequency conditions through upgraded glazing specifications, targeting performance levels commensurate with the high-quality interior environment Hines sought to deliver. The façade design accounts for the tower's varying orientation and floor-to-floor exposure, with attenuation requirements calibrated to each face of the building and its proximity to specific noise sources at grade and above.

Interior acoustic design concentrated on the separation of tenant office floors from mechanical spaces, amenity areas, and the building's own structural and service systems. With 60 floors of occupied space, the acoustic performance of floor and wall assemblies between tenant levels and between tenants and amenity zones is foundational to the building's ability to deliver on its market positioning. The team developed specifications for intertenancy separations and addressed the acoustic relationship between the conference center and the office floors it serves, supporting an interior environment that would meet the expectations of sophisticated tenants in one of Chicago's most high-profile commercial addresses.

Vibration control received particular attention given the fitness center's location within the building's lower floors and its vertical and horizontal adjacency to conference areas and occupied tenant spaces. Impact energy from fitness equipment and group exercise can travel efficiently through a concrete high-rise structure, and without deliberate isolation at the source, that energy can compromise the acoustic quality of floors well above or below the amenity level. The team developed vibration isolation strategies for the fitness center floor assemblies and coordinated the stacking and adjacency plan to reduce the number of sensitive programmatic boundaries requiring high-performance separation. The result is a tower whose amenity offering and acoustic performance reinforce rather than undermine each other.