Miriam Johnson—Reflection

To start the field trip off, we went into the One Illinois Center and explored the many fascinating wonders inside. These included a gallery of informative photos and text describing how Chicago became the “City of Architecture,” the grand Chicago City model featuring more than 4,000 buildings and other immersive experiences. We then watched a short film describing how Chicago got to be where it is today, architecture-wise. Soon after, we split off into smaller groups, each with a tour guide, and walked, not too far, to admire the other parts of the One Illinois Center, a simple but fascinating building. We later rotated in an orderly fashion to visit other buildings as a small group. With each stop to one of the seven buildings we toured, including Marina City, the London House, Jean Baptiste Point du Sable’s homestead location and many others, we learned more and more about Chicago’s captivating past.

Mr. Shaker took us on this field trip because we were studying architecture/buildings in class, one of the nine universals in all civilizations. Each day we learned a little bit about each building that we later went to. We discussed what we thought of the building, and Mr. Shaker gave us some facts about the building and how it was an important building in Chicago. We also learned how to “read” buildings, a task that involved going to buildings and studying the ornate details of it. In my case, section C went to the Webster House, which now houses LPP (Lincoln Park Preschool). This building displays beautiful ornamentation and an intriguing past. Some of the questions we had to answer included visual and factual information regarding how tall and old we thought the building was and also what we liked about it. These skills were later applied during our field trip when we had to draw a quick sketch and write about standout parts of the building and a few important and/or cool facts about each building.

Some of my favorite buildings included Marina City, the Aqua Tower and the London House. Marina City, or “the corn cob buildings,” consists of two identical buildings that were built between 1960 and 1967. This 65-story building has more than 896 parking spots in the first 19 floors and the rest are residential and commercial. I personally like the corn-shape design and the fun recreational area around it, including a movie theatre that makes living there just that much better. One really cool thing that I learned about Marina City was that a movie scene from The Hunter was filmed there, and in the scene a car flies off of the 17th floor of the parking garage into the Chicago River.
The Aqua Tower was built in 2007 and was the tallest building in the United States designed by a woman, Jeanne Gang, who later maxed that and built the Residences at the St. Regis Sales Gallery. This 82-story building is fascinating, with white wavy balconies on teal and blue glass that make it look as if it were an ocean. I love all of the texture and use of materials that makes this 859-foot mixed-use high rise so unique.

Another building rich with history is the London House, which consists of an older building and a new, more modern glass building. I personally liked the old one, built in 1922, that consists of many designs carved in and out of stone. The facade of the building is curved and has four Corinthian columns in the front. Something that I learned about this building was that it marks the spot where Fort Dearborn used to be.

Even though these were some of my favorite buildings, I loved all of them. Each one told a different story that we were to read and learn about. This field trip was an amazing experience and should be appreciated by many more students in the future.