

Exhibit features firm's urban shopping mall

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Contributing Critic

Malls seem to be in the news these days one way or another, mostly of the shopping variety.

Another type of mall features prominently in the work of an important Nebraska firm of architects, Bahr Vermeer and Haecker, whose offices are in Lincoln and Omaha.

The mall in question here is the Central Park Mall in Omaha, and this \$5 million urban project is one of the largest carried out by the firm. Central Park Mall is a swath of carefully modulated parkland that runs from the Omaha Missouri riverfront to 14th Street, and features a continuous canal gliding down its eight block length which encompasses gardens, picnic spaces, waterfalls, outdoor exhibition spaces and restored existing buildings.

A far cry, this, from the expanses of parking lots that will soon encircle the hoped-for revitalization of our own downtown.

The work of the architectural firm

of Bahr Vermeer and Haecker is of interest this week since representations of it will form the culminating exhibit in the year-long series of Architecture From the Plains series that have been displayed in the Seaton Hall 205 Gallery in the KSU Department of Architecture.

The firm was founded in 1968 and is engaged in the practice of architecture and related design over a four state midwestern region. Since its founding the firm has gone on to win a page full of awards that range from national design awards to *Progressive Architecture* awards to American Institute of Architecture regional honors.

The firm offers a variety of services in architecture, landscape architecture, graphics, interior design and master planning and from the modest beginnings of a two-man office, the organization has grown to encompass a staff of more than thirty working in the two offices.

The architectural work of Bahr Vermeer and Haecker has been

featured in professional journals world wide and its building designs demonstrate a sensitivity to contemporary styles without being overpoweringly self aggrandizing.

At 7:30 p.m. on Thursday in the Little Theater of the KSU Student Union, two members of the firm, Gary Bowen and George Haecker, will deliver a presentation describing Bahr Vermeer and Haecker's buildings and the philosophy, organization and design methods from which they are derived.

This presentation, and the exhibit of the firm's work which will be on display every day this week, is open to the public without charge through the sponsorship of the Department of Architecture with the cooperation of the Kansas State University Student Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

This successful series of exhibits and presentations of architectural work has become established as an annual event and will continue with the new academic year in the fall.

