

Series seeks to heighten appreciation of area's architecture

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Contributing Writer

Last year the Riley County Historical Museum presented a series of talks under the title "Riley County: Looking Backward Toward the Future."

That fascinating series of presentations by members of the community led listeners through the developments of the past that have created the community that we know today and, indeed, prompted thoughts about the nature of this community.

This year the Department of Architecture at KSU will be presenting a sequence of exhibitions under the general heading of "Architecture

from the Plains." Where the Riley County Historical Museum's series dealt with the way our immediate environment has developed, the series of architectural exhibits is aimed at showing the quality of the built environment over a far wider area of the region.

"We tend to be aware of architecture that is being constructed nationally and to see how fascinating so much of it is," says Eugene Kremer, head of the Department of Architecture.

"Because we are surrounded with images in newspapers and magazines, and on television, of magnificent and well-known buildings, we tend to overlook the fine

buildings that are being designed in this region."

Each exhibition will consist of drawings and photographs of designs and buildings by a regional firm of architects. Each exhibit will be on view for five days and each will be accompanied by a talk and slide presentation by principals in the firm.

"We look on architectural design as an activity that is very much alive and dynamic," said Professor Kremer. "I do not think that it is sufficient to passively look at pictures or drawings. It is my hope that by being present at the talks by the architects themselves, we will begin to get a feeling for the vibrancy and complexity of the activity of architectural design as well as obtaining an insight into the nature of the buildings being

exhibited."

In all there will be six exhibitions between this week and the middle of April. Each display will be mounted in Room 205 of Seaton Hall on the campus of KSU and will be open to the public, as will each evening presentation by the architects.

"There is much good work being done in this region, of which we are insufficiently aware, and we view this series of exhibitions as an opportunity for people to get to know and to understand their environment in general and the buildings that surround them in particular."

The first exhibition has been of the work of Schaefer and Associates P.A. This Wichita firm has designed many notable buildings in the region and has garnered many awards. Most

notable, perhaps, for Manhattan residents is the fact that Schaefer Associates designed the renovation of Manhattan Middle School and has also been the consulting firm to the USD 383 School Board in the evaluation of school needs in Manhattan.

Says Professor Kremer, "Architecture firms need an opportunity to get to know the Department of Architecture, its students and the community better. This series of exhibitions is a visible demonstration of cooperation between the architectural profession and this community."

In succeeding months exhibitions

and presentations will be given by the architectural firms of Paddy Berkebile Nelson Associates; Keine and Bradley Partnership; The Hoffmann Partnership; Platt, Adams, Braht and Associates and the Office of Bahr Vermeer and Haecker Architects.

As Eugene Kremer says, "Despite the lack of national name recognition, architectural firms in the region are creating outstanding buildings, and we are confident that the 'Architecture from the Plains' series will increase our understanding and appreciation of that fact."

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