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## Review of *Guide to Kansas Architecture* by David H. Sachs and George Ehrlich

Jennifer Honebrink  
*University of Nebraska - Lincoln*

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**Guide to Kansas Architecture.** David H. Sachs and George Ehrlich. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996. xv+349 pp. Maps, photos, bibliography, index. \$22.50 paper (ISBN 0-7006-0778-1).

Presenting the architecture of an entire state is a daunting task, given the profusion of potential pieces with something special to offer. This book admittedly does not contain all the structures most worthy of preservation or only the best designed. Instead it provides a representative sample of architectural styles and types across Kansas, giving equal coverage to cities and less populous areas. Structures were chosen for their architectural, historical, or cultural significance from those mentioned in previously published works, the Kansas State Register, and the Kansas section of the National Register, as well as from those suggested by the Kansas and Kansas City chapters of the American Institute of Architects and by architects, preservationists, and local historians.

Sachs and Ehrlich organize their discussion effectively. Kansas is first divided along county lines into seven geographic areas. The guide to each area begins with a concise introduction neatly reviewing the forces that influenced construction there, including landforms, available materials, and early settlement patterns. This is followed by descriptions of individual properties, arranged by county and city. In addition to buildings, Sachs and Ehrlich list structures such as historic districts, parks, and bridges. Simplified maps are provided for those cities with a larger number of structures, but no specific tour route is outlined, thereby freeing readers to create their own.

The descriptions of properties are appealing both for what they contain and for their personable tone. Each includes the current name, address, and

date of construction of its structure; many are also illustrated. Less often an architect or builder is specified. The narration tends to focus on either the architectural aspects of the building or its historical or cultural significance. Those unfamiliar with architectural terms may find an architectural dictionary helpful, though not a necessity unless one's bent is toward learning about architectural styles. The human dimension included for many buildings rounds out their stories, offering something for those primarily interested in the people who used these structures. Although Sachs and Ehrlich do lean more towards buildings in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they still convey a discerning mixture of old and new, typical and unusual, commercial and residential. On a single page, for instance, one can find a Modern house designed by an architect, an 1885 Second Empire house with no architect listed, a Postmodern grocery store designed by an architect, and an 1878 Victorian church, again with no architect listed.

In all, Sachs and Ehrlich present an impressive overview of the various types of architecture within Kansas, giving it a pleasant human cast. Their work will appeal to those within the field of architecture as well as other historians interested in the built environment. They also offer a solid basis for locating material for further research in a number of areas, including studies evaluating the work of specific architects or examining vernacular church design. **Jennifer Honebrink**, *Department of Architecture, University of Nebraska-Lincoln*.