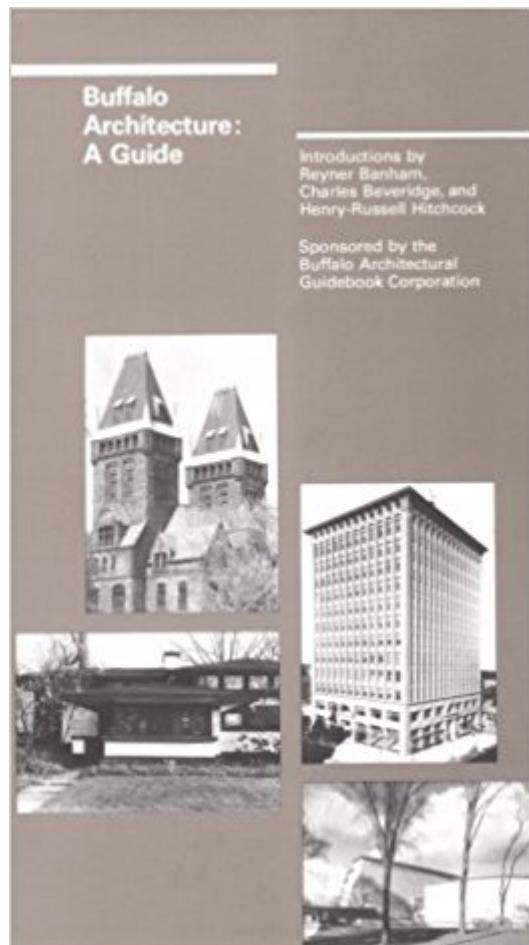


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Buffalo Architecture: A Guide



Synopsis

For its size, the city of Buffalo, New York, possesses a remarkable number and variety of architectural masterpieces from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Adler and Sullivan's Prudential building, H. H. Richardson's massive Buffalo State Hospital, Richard Upjohn's Sr. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, five prairie houses by Frank Lloyd Wright, and building by Daniel Burnham, Albert Kahn, and the firms of McKim, Mead, and White, and Lockwood, Green and Company, among others. These structures by prominent "outsiders" served to spur the efforts of local architects, builders, and craftsmen, and all of them built within the context of the city-wide park and parkway system designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. In addition, the city and its environs exhibit representative works by more recent architects, among them Eero and Eliel Saarinen, Walther Gropius, Marcel Breuer, Paul Rudolph, Minoru Yamasaki, and the firm of Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill. Buffalo's rich architectural and planning heritage has attracted the attention of several prominent historians, capable of the challenge of evaluating its significance. Reyner Banham is one of the world's leading authorities on the theory and practice of architecture, and he has written extensively on design in the industrial age (and Buffalo's innovative manufacturing plants and grain elevators are important exemplars of such design). Charles Beveridge, whose essay covers the park and parkway system, is editor of the Olmsted papers at The American University. And Henry Russell Hitchcock is the dean of American architectural historians, and the organizer of a 1940 exhibition on Buffalo's built environment. Their essays are followed by seven sections that delineate the city's neighborhoods, each provided with a map, neighborhood history, and a full complement of photographs with descriptive building captions. An eighth section, "Lost Buffalo," describes demolished buildings, chief among them Wright's great Larkin administration building, while the remaining sections venture out of town, exploring Erie and Niagra Counties, other parts of Western New York, and southern Ontario.

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Customer Reviews

For its size, the city of Buffalo, New York, possesses a remarkable number and variety of architectural masterpieces from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Adler and Sullivan's Prudential building, H.H. Richardson's massive Buffalo State Hospital, Richard Upjohn's St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, five Prairie Houses by Frank Lloyd Wright, and buildings by Daniel Burnham, Albert Kahn, and the firms of McKim, Mead and White and Lockwood, Greene and Company, among others.

Reading all the rave reviews on this page made this an easy purchase, but I was disappointed with what arrived. This thin, outdated catalog is not the kind of quality you would expect for the architectural treasure that is Buffalo. This city achieved fabulous material and spiritual wealth as the focal point of three important socioeconomic events - economic growth as a result of the completion of the Erie Canal, the expansion of the Second Great Awakening, and the expansion of European immigration. Buffalo's rich architecture belies its reputation as a desperately poor, crime-ridden, ugly city. In fact, one can argue (as I do) that it contains the most important ensemble of 19th-century urban architecture in the United States, and its Victorian cityscape is among the best in the world. Buffalo deserves a better book. What you get here is a catalog of landmark structures, chosen and published in 1981. The book is standard AIA format, though it is not an AIA publication. The sites are organized into geographic areas. Some of the 200 featured structures come with a brief descriptive essay, some come with a short descriptive sentence, and a few include no description at all, other than a name and address. The catalog itself is woefully incomplete. All the sites are in downtown, near north or near west sides. The important EAST SIDE, Broadway and Ellicott are almost entirely absent, and essentially dismissed as "troubled areas." That's too bad. People who know Buffalo know what kind of treasures are hiding in these "troubled areas," and they are urgently important to the architectural and cultural history of the city. For example, three conspicuously omitted landmarks are St. Mary of Sorrows Roman Catholic Church (a National Historic Landmark), St. Adalbert's Basilica (the first basilica in the United States), and Canisius College. The

photography is also incomplete, with only about half of the entries including one. If there is a photograph, it is of purely pragmatic, stock quality. There's no attempt at artistry, but there are a few interesting interior shots. So, while it's nice to have SOMETHING which represents awesome Buffalo, we need a serious expansion and update of current offerings, particularly with the National Trust for Historic Preservation coming to town in October 2011! This book can be used as a decent walking tour guide for serious cultural tourists, but its relative lack of detail will make its value limited for architectural historians.

This book is a comprehensive review of numerous architectural marvels-- treasures that rarely exist in other US cities. The downtown "skyscrapers" constructed at the turn of the century have endured as a result of the economic downfall of a great city. Fortunately, in regard to these works of art, there was no money available to destroy these buildings and replace them with "modern" designs. "Lemons" to some, turned into a very fine visual lemonade! A reminder that things from the past can be truly appreciated today! I've already recommended this book to many.

Good as expected but a little outdated and not every building named has a picture

people have to see how great buffalo is and was; lovely old pictures, lovely old homes, lots of snow, quite a history

for my husband, arrive on time. very kind and the best seller. This is the first "larger product" in our kitchen collection. Thus far (one week), it is sharp, performs well for chopping and slicing, and has excellent balance and weight. Time will tell how it retains its edge and resharpen. Cheap yet works perfectly.

This book acts in many ways as the unofficial guidebook to exploring what is one of the most important architectural cities in America. For those who are familiar with Buffalo and those who are not the book is filled with a splendid variety of both well known Richardson and Wright masterpieces and some not so well known masterpieces. Its divided into sections based on the geography of the city so it makes the perfect book if one wants to set out exploring. Buffalos neighborhoods and amazing housing stock are unparalleled in size and preservation nationwide. Its American Indian inspired art deco city hall, perhaps the finest building of its type in the nation is just one of buildings you will find profiled. Reyner Banham ,the editor, was at the time was on the faculty at the State

University of New York at Buffalo School of Architecture. His wonderful book about the origins of the modern movement and its ties to Buffalos grain elevators, A Concrete Atlantis could act as a supplement to Buffalo Architecture: A Guide if you are interested in Buffalos industrial buildings as well...

This book and the city it shows us are a must see for architects, students, and architectural buffs alike. The book is packed with wonderfull black and white photos showing a suprising array of high quality though little known American architecture. It is refreshing and informative to see and learn of architecture which has been passed over by the traditional architectural press solely because it is not in the typical bigger cities. The buildings presented form a rich and diverse portfolio ranging from masterpieces by Sullivan, Wright, and Richardson,to the simplest of victorian cottages, to a magnificent cathedral or a delicate greek revival temple. This book presents the unknown and forgotten richness of American architecture and releases the reader form the monotony of seeing the same cities and the same buildings published over and over agian. The writers of this book ventured out into the great american wilderness and and showed us its refinement.

The book rocks, so does the city. Buy it!

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