

The Columbian Building

112 SW 6th Street, Topeka, Kansas

Located in Downtown Topeka

The Columbian Building, originally known as the Knox Building, was built for William C. Knox in 1888.

Designed by then famous Topeka architect Seymour Davis. Davis was also known locally for his work on the Charles Curtis house and the Kansas Building, in World's Columbian Exhibition of 1893. By all accounts it was a magnificent and expensive building by 1880's Topeka standards. The original cost was projected to be \$50,000 but ended up being \$75,000. Built during a boom period in Topeka construction history, the Columbian Building's five story height towered over neighboring buildings. Knox's United States Savings Bank occupied the second floor, as evidenced today by the custom doorknobs with a stylized "K" embossed in the brass. Other early occupants were investment firms, insurance companies and lawyers.

The building was later sold when United States Savings Bank failed. From a speech given by Carl Meyer of the Columbian Securities Corporation, we learn that the building was purchased by Col. John S. Dean from the mortgage company who then named it the Columbian Building. In 1920, Col. Dean organized the Columbian Title and Trust Company. Columbian Title and Trust remained in the building for many years and the building was sold to the current owner by heirs of Col. Deans. The new owners recognized the importance of the history that surrounded the building and had the property placed on the National Historic Registry in 1977. All subsequent renovations have been completed with the intent to preserve the Columbian Buildings status as a National Historic Property.



Designed by Seymour Davis, who also designed the "Kansas Building" for the "Worlds Columbian Exhibition of 1893."



This building was originally built in 1888 with extensive restoration beginning in 1977.

Leasing Information:
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The Columbian Building

Originally – William C. Knox Building

The Columbian Building is variously described as Eclectic style with a variety of architectural styles, including Egyptian, Romanesque, and Richardsonian Romanesque. The last and probably most important of the building boom structures of the 1880's, architecturally this is certainly one of the finest late Victorian, Romanesque-Prairie styled edifices in Kansas. By all accounts it was a magnificent and expensive building by 1880's Topeka standards. The original cost was projected to be \$50,000 but ended up being \$75,000. The plumbing contract alone was said to have been the largest ever in the state at \$10,500.

The building is approximately 50 feet wide, 130 feet deep and 65 feet high with 5 stories, about 32,500 square feet. The front of the structure is Colorado red sandstone originally painted cream color but the red sandstone seeped through until it was painted its current distinctive red color. The other sides are mostly red brick. Most of the stones have rock faced surfaces, but smoother dressed stone -with what appears to be bush-hammered or peck finish - is used for the entry, arched window trim and for the cornice and upper portion of the building.

According to the 1913 fire insurance map the wall thicknesses are 24 inches for the 2nd floor, 20 inches for the 3rd floor, 16 inches for the 4th floor and 12 inches for the 5th floor, presumably the 1st floor wall thickness is 30 inches. There is much decorative interest on the south façade including the oriel centered on the 4th and 5th floors, the main entry with its large flanking semicircular arched windows, the west column carving centers around a squirrel and on the east column a bird and a snake. Originally the entry way had stone steps from the street level to provide access to the building on what is now the 2nd floor originally occupied by Knox's United States Savings Bank as evidenced today by the custom doorknobs with a stylized "K" embossed in the brass. The entry had been changed to the present ground floor entry by the 1920's.

A fire of unknown origin caused extensive damage to the upper two floors in 1937. The 5th floor has historically renovated in 1977 and the 4th was elegantly returned to its historical origins in 2002.

FEATURES

- On National Historic Register
- Downtown Topeka, Kansas
- 5 Story masonry building
- Ornate cut stone front
- Attractive tile floors in halls and lobby
- Carpeting and hardwood in suites
- Oak and glass doors
- Marble and granite wanescoating
- Brass hardware
- Light channels to enhance natural lighting
- Antique 2,000 lb. capacity, manual operated Montgomery elevator
- 1982 Kansas Preservation Alliance, Award for Excellence
- Suites for lease

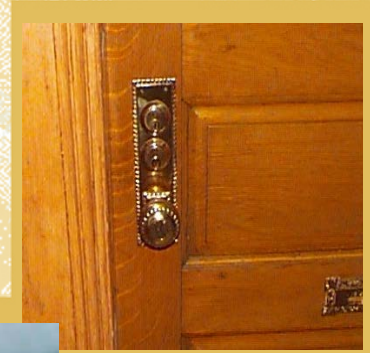


Photo shows sharp contrast of the Columbian Building against the modern materials and lines of the newer AVIVA Financial Building, built in 1996.