



## NEWS RELEASE

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# Kansas State Capitol - Architecture



The Kansas State Capitol, like other U.S. statehouses built in the 19th century, was inspired by classical architecture in Greece, Rome, and Europe. The design of the U. S. Capitol was no exception and influenced the plans proposed by Edward Townsend Mix in 1866. The designs Mix proposed were originally selected by the building committee, which wanted to incorporate modifications in the plans.

John G. Haskell, the statehouse architect, was asked to revise the design. His version also incorporated classically-inspired elements, which became the design constructed. He changed the placement of the wings and interior and removed the mansard roof. Haskell proposed the shape of a Greek cross, with magnificent colonnades at the end of each arm. The exterior of each wing would feature finely cut masonry with a rougher outer surface, a smooth middle section, and classical detail above the columns. The building roof would be made of copper. His revisions were approved by the Capitol building committee.

Most of the windows have cut limestone sills and lintels. The east and west wings have arched windows; the designs for these windows are distinctly American, an adaptation of the Italian arched window used in the Victorian period in America. Sculptures were to be etched in the north and south pediments above the columns. The building committee planned for the spaces to “embrace the characteristic features of the great seal of the state,” according to the Topeka Daily Capital, April 6, 1890, and be “devoted entirely to the representation of the central and always most memorable and most noble era of Kansas political history, the struggle between slavery and freedom.” Architect George Ropes submitted the ornate design for the south pediment. This project was never completed and the irregular stones on the pediments are still visible today.

Haskell planned a dome similar to that of the U. S. Capitol, one that would include a statue on top, plus others throughout the building. George Evans, the contractor for the dome, expressed his personal sentiments regarding Haskell’s use of classical precedents. “I believe that we have not got far away enough from the old Greek and Egyptian models,” he said.



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