

Lot Lines: AIA architecture tour

By: J. David Chapman Guest Columnist April 27, 2017 0



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Architecture Week is an opportunity to celebrate architecture and to promote the importance of our built environment.

The American Institute of Architects Central Oklahoma Chapter designated April 17-23, 2017, as Architecture Week in Oklahoma. The week culminates every year with its Architecture Tour. On Saturday, I took the trek with my fellow built-environment enthusiasts taking look in every nook and cranny of these buildings we might never have the opportunity to tour, and critically evaluate, if not for this designated day.

Every spring, I anxiously await the lineup of residential homes and commercial buildings that the Oklahoma City AIA Chapter felt were significant enough that people would pay \$25 and take an entire afternoon to tour. This year's tour presented four residences, two office buildings, and one school.

The residences were Mark and Beth Brewer's home in the Sugar Hill neighborhood in Arcadia, Janise Nepveux's renovated two-story condo in Hunter's Green, William and Susie White's home on North Harvey Parkway, and Steve Mason's new modern pad on an urban lot in the South of St. Anthony district, leveraging a view of downtown.

The office buildings chosen were Midtown's BP Lower 48 regional office space and the new headquarters of Bob Moore Auto Group on NW Fifth Street in OKC. The last building on the tour was the newly constructed Heartland Middle School in Edmond.

There are member architects of the OKC AIA Chapter stationed at every location on tour, providing vital information about the project/building/structure and providing crowd control.

For me, as a trained engineer, the crowd is the most important piece of this tour. I spend more time than most in the buildings, eavesdropping on "tourist's" comments about the features, amenities, furnishings, and art, or in some cases, the lack of amenities and features. It reminds me of the important skill set these architects bring to the build environment; the artistry and design components they add to the engineer's technical and structural aspects of the project.

Thanks to the AIA Central Oklahoma Chapter and owners of these spaces for continuing to provide us tourists the opportunity to stomp around in, and critique, your projects. Can you imagine opening up your home to hundreds of strangers to critique your choices of materials, furniture or art?

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