

Architectural Terms Used in “30 Architectural Gems in Nebraska”

Adobe – Sun dried bricks, a house made out of sun-dried bricks.

Arcade - Arches on piers or columns either standing on their own or part of a wall.

Arch – A curved structure supporting the weight above it.

Architect – A person who designs buildings.

Architecture – The art and science of designing buildings.

Ashlar – Hewn or squared stone.

Asymmetrical – An arrangement of parts that is not symmetrical.

Atrium – A central hall usually with a glass roof or skylight extending the full height or several stories of a building.

Axis – A straight line indicating the center of symmetry.

Balustrade – A row of short posts or pillars supporting a rail around a balcony or terrace.

Base – The lowest visible part of a building.

Bay – The spaces in a building marked out by windows, columns, etc..

Beauty – Qualities that gratify and/or harmonious combination of diverse elements into unity.

Belt Course – A horizontal band around a building.

Bracket – A small supporting piece of stone or other material.

Buttress – A mass of masonry support built against a wall.

Cantilever – A structural part of a building that extends horizontally beyond its obvious means of support.

Capital – The top of a column or pilaster, usually decorated.

Clapboard – Overlapping horizontal boards with one edge thicker than the other.

Classical – Characteristic of ancient Greek or Roman architecture.

Clerestory – A row of windows high in a wall.

Colonnade – A row of columns carrying an entablature.

Column – A vertical support, usually containing a base, shaft, and capital.

Corbel – A stone or wood projection from a wall designed to support a building horizontally.

Cornice – An ornamental molding around the wall of a room or building perimeter, just below the ceiling or roof.

Crenulations – Finely notched openings at the top of a wall.

Cupola – A small structure that protrudes above the roof of a building.

Dentils – Small square blocks paced in a band to decorate a cornice (they resemble teeth).

Dome – A rounded roof with a circular base.

Dormers – A window under a small gable built out from a sloping roof.

Eaves – The overhanging edge of a roof.

Elevation – A drawings showing one side of a building.

Elevator – A moveable platform or cage in a building for carrying freight or passengers up or down.

Entablature – A projecting frieze or cornice of several parts found on the front of a building.

Façade – The main face or front of a building.

Frieze – A band of sculpture or decoration around the top of a wall or building.

Function – The intended use of a building.

Gable – The triangular portion of a wall formed at the end of a pitched roof.

Gallery – A long, narrow balcony, room or passageway.

Geodesic dome – A dome that has many flat, straight-sided faces formed by a framework of bars that intersect to form equilateral triangles or polygons.

Hip roof – A roof that rises directly from the wall plate on all sides, and therefore having no gable.

Keystone – The central, wedge-shaped stone or brick at the top of an arch that locks the other stones or bricks in position.

Lintel – A horizontal piece of timber or stone, etc. over a door or other opening.

Load bearing walls – Walls that support the roof and floors of a building.

Mansard – A type of roof that has a steep lower part and a less steep upper part on all sides of a building.

Parapet – A low protective wall along the edge of a wall or roof.

Pediment – A triangular gable crowning the front of a building of the Classical Greek style.

Pilaster – A rectangular column, especially an ornamental one, that projects from the wall into which it sets.

Pitch – The steepness of a roof or slope.

Plan – A drawing showing the relative position and size of the rooms or areas of a building.

Porte-cochere – A large covered gateway for vehicles at the entrance of a building.

Portico – A structure consisting of a roof, supported by columns on one side and attached to a building on the other side, forming a porch.

Pre-cast concrete – Concrete poured into a cast of the required shape and allowed to cure before being taken out and put into position.

Quoin – Cornerstones used to visually indicate strength.

Rammed earth – A construction method pressing a damp mixture of earth containing suitable proportions of sand, gravel and clay into an externally supported frame that molds the shape of a wall section creating a solid wall of earth.

Reinforced concrete frame – A concrete structure reinforced with steel that supports the roof and floors of a building so that the walls of the building are not load bearing.

Rubble stone – Masonry that is constructed using rough unfinished stones.

Side-light – A window at the side of a door.

Spire – A tall, tapering structure rising from a tower or roof and ending in a point.

Structure – A combination of related parts put together, set up, built, arranged, and fastened to resist the forces of nature.

Structural steel frame – A steel structure that supports the roof and floors of a building so that the walls of the building are not load bearing.

Stucco – Plaster or cement used for coating surfaces of walls or moldings to form architectural decoration.

Symmetrical – Corresponding arrangement or balancing of the parts or elements of a whole in respect to size, shape, and position on opposite sides of an axis or center.

Terra Cotta – A hard, durable, kiln-burned clay product used glazed or un-glazed as a decorative building material.

Transom – A small window above a door.

Truss – A framework of wood or metal supporting a roof or floor.

Turret – A small tower-like projection on a building.

Vestibule – A small room or hall between an outer door and the main part of a building.