Columbus: A Small City Hiding Huge Architectural Treasures

Introduction and Tour Summary
Columbus Indiana is a unique city, filled with buildings designed by countless architects including I.M. Pei, Eero Saarinen, Robert Venturi, and many more. We were lucky enough to tour the city and view many of these buildings including a few of the six that are considered national historic landmarks, the most prominent of which is the Miller house. This house was the amazing result of several architects working together, and has become a timeless treasure that serves to display the beauty modern architecture can create.

We also toured First Christian Church, a building designed by Eliel Saarinen. This church was revolutionary in its rebellion against classical ornamentation and grandeur, forsaking the former qualities for asymmetry and simplicity. The final building we visited was the church designed by Eero Saarinen, North Christian Church. This building’s enormous spire has served as an iconic landmark for all of Columbus for decades, and will continue to do so in the future.

Cummins International Headquarters Analysis
However, there are many more buildings that, while not considered national historic landmarks, are still fantastic examples of the diversity of architecture. My favorite building that we encountered while on the tour was the Cummins International Headquarters building. This building was designed by Kevin Roche in 1983, and it is unique in the fact that it was built around the original Cummins factory. Influenced by the popular styles and environmental focuses of the 80’s, Roche followed a modernist design approach while creating the building, and included some natural influences through innovative methods.
Form
The influences of environmentalism and modernism can be seen all throughout the building’s structure, including in the materials used during construction. Precast concrete serves to give off both a clean feel and provide better insulation that most normal walls have, and the sleek yet narrow windows give a futuristic appearance to the structure. These windows serve dual purposes however, as their small profile allows a beautiful view of the outside gardens while limiting surface area for heat loss. In most other locations, the building’s form of sharp edges and angles would usually give off a harsh, futuristic feel. However, the grid patterns of the overhead structures outside serve as a perfect lattice for plant growth, creating the appearance of a structure overgrown in lush plant life.

Function
Due to the fact that it is simply an office building, assessing the form of the Cummins offices would seem an easy task. Taking the rest of the previously mentioned aspects into account contradicts this notion, instead displaying how the building serves several different purposes. While functioning as highly as any other office headquarters, these offices are much more efficient in energy consumption. The eco-friendliness of the structure serves as a beacon to many other companies, showing how there is a viable compromise amongst efficiency and preservation. In fact, preservation is another key idea of this building, since it utilizes the original Cummins factory as a new lunch room. Incorporating the history of the company while also utilizing a historic structure helps to preserve the past while benefitting both company and community. And finally, yet another benefit of the building for the community is the large expanse of parks that surround the building, creating a beautiful expanse that is both beautiful and functional.
Conclusion
The many buildings throughout Columbus serve as an inspiration to both and architects and the general population that has the privilege to experience their unique styles. Implementing these styles throughout the world while also fostering new ones would without a doubt increase the beautiful culture of countless cities, while also demonstrating that increasing form does not necessarily mean decreasing function.

One of Columbus’s iconic bridges forms an entrance into the unique city, beckoning new visitors in.
Works Cited


