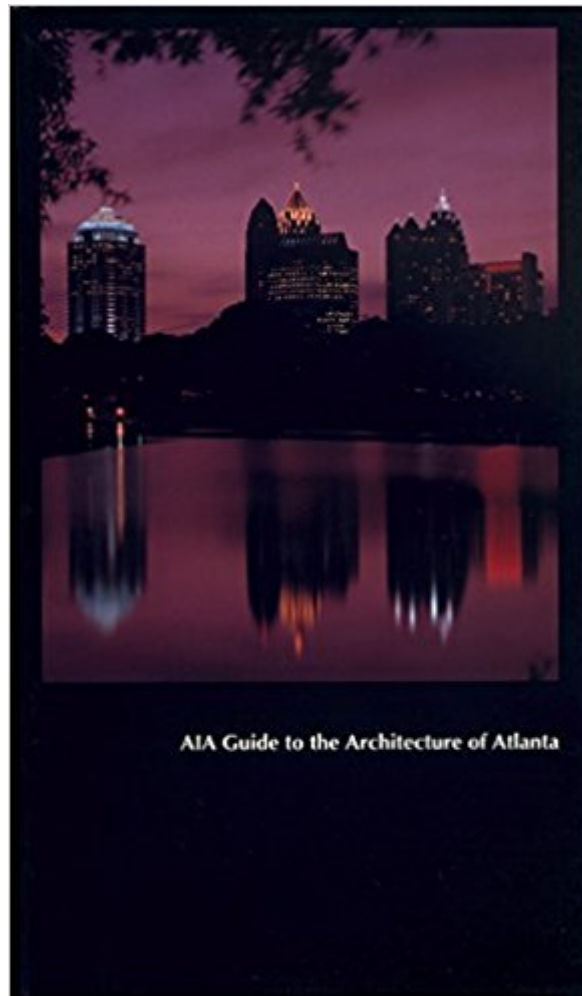




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AIA Guide To The Architecture Of Atlanta



Synopsis

This lively guidebook surveys four hundred buildings within the Atlanta metropolitan area—from the sleek marble and glass of the Coca-Cola Tower to the lancet arches and onion domes of the Fox Theater, from the quiet stateliness of Roswell's antebellum mansions to the art-deco charms of the Varsity grill. Published in conjunction with the Atlanta chapter of the American Institute of Architects, it combines historical, descriptive, and critical commentary with more than 250 photographs and area maps. As the book makes clear, Atlanta has two faces: the "Traditional City," striving to strike a balance between the preservation of a valuable past and the challenge of modernization, and also the "Invisible Metropolis," a decentralized city shaped more by the isolated ventures of private business than by public intervention. Accordingly, the city's architecture reflects a dichotomy between the northern-emulating boosterism that made Atlanta a boom town and the genteel aesthetic more characteristic of its southern locale. The city's recent development continues the trend; as Atlanta's workplaces become increasingly "high-tech," its residential areas remain resolutely traditional. In the book's opening section, Dana White places the different stages of Atlanta's growth—from its beginnings as a railroad town to its recent selection as the site of the 1996 Summer Olympics—in their social, cultural, and economic context; Isabelle Gournay then analyzes the major urban and architectural trends from a critical perspective. The main body of the book consists of more than twenty architectural tours organized according to neighborhoods or districts such as Midtown, Druid Hills, West End, Ansley Park, and Buckhead. The buildings described and pictured capture the full range of architectural styles found in the city. Here are the prominent new buildings that have transformed Atlanta's skyline and neighborhoods: Philip John and John Burgee's revivalist IBM Tower, John Portman's taut Westin Peachtree Plaza, and Richard Meier's gleaming, white-paneled High Museum of Art, among others. Here too are landmarks from another era, such as the elegant residences designed in the early twentieth century by Neel Reid and Philip Shutze, two of the first Atlanta-based architects to achieve national prominence. Included as well are the eclectic skyscrapers near Five Points, the postmodern office clusters along Interstate 285, and the Victorian homes of Inman Park. Easy-to-follow area maps complement the descriptive entries and photographs; a bibliography, glossary, and indexes to buildings and architects round out the book. Whether first-time visitors or lifelong residents, readers will find in these pages a wealth of fascinating information about Atlanta's built environment.

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Customer Reviews

As any traveler knows, a good guidebook is a passport to discovery. Even if you've lived here for years, the new AIA Guide to the Architecture of Atlanta will probably turn a stroll into a historical, cultural, and aesthetic expedition. . . . The book's pocket size makes it handy for those who plan to take the walking tours laid out within, but the quantity and size of the photos render it a perfect complement to armchair tours as well. (Atlanta Journal-Constitution)

Isabelle Gournay was educated at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the Ecole du Louvre in Paris and at Yale University, from which she received a Ph.D. in art history. She lectures at several Atlanta-area colleges and has written extensively for architectural publications in the United States and Europe. Paul Beswick is a registered architect who heads a photography company, Beswick International, based in Atlanta. Dana White, the director of the Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts at Emory University, has published widely on the history of Atlanta and its built environment. Gerald Sams, a practicing architect in Atlanta, has held various leadership positions with the AIA components in Atlanta and Savannah.

Because this book was written before the 1996 Olympics and organized around the major architects (and firms) practicing in Atlanta, there are conspicuous omissions. Unless the structure you wish to research has a brand name architect (you know, John Portman, John Burgee, Philip Johnson, etc...), it won't be in here. And if it's a church outside the city center, even if it had a brand name

architect, it won't be in here either. There's a heavy modernist slant to the book, and an inexplicable lack of coverage of Atlanta's important ecclesiastical and neoclassical structures, particularly outside the city center. Architectural historians and classicists will be disappointed, which is surprising considering that Elizabeth Dowling, classicist extraordinaire, was the senior consultant for the book. Perhaps a new edition can improve on these problems.

First let me say that I really enjoy these AIA guides and this one is good. Atlanta has grown tremendously in the last twenty years and its skyline reflects that fact. This guide does not compare with the best AIA guides like the guide to Chicago, New York, Detroit, or Houston, but it hits on most of the major buildings and I liked the fact it is sectioned into different areas. I would have liked to have seen more on the Buckhead area and Druid Hills. I would have also liked to have seen every building have been accompanied by an image, that is a must in books of this kind. If you are someone from Atlanta or are interested in the architecture of Atlanta I recommend this book, but if you are just looking for AIA guides then I suggest getting the afore mentioned guides before this one.

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