

# DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH FOURTH AVENUE WALKING TOUR



## 17 Centennial Building (Carpenter's Union Building) 241 Fourth Avenue

We do not know the architect of this building of 1876, but the composition of the façade is rather sophisticated: wall planes advance and recede beneath a heavy, elaborate cornice.

## 18 Investment Building (Insurance Exchange) 235–239 Fourth Avenue

This 1927 work of John M. Donn, a Washington, D.C. architect, is between two buildings of the same approximate façade dimensions, but they were built about 25 years earlier. Terra cotta has yielded to limestone, and a darker and more textured brick is in fashion; simplicity and lightness of form and detailing are evident. At the top, notice the corners chamfered with obelisk-like elements.

## 19 Benedum-Trees Building (Machesney Building) 221–225 Fourth Avenue

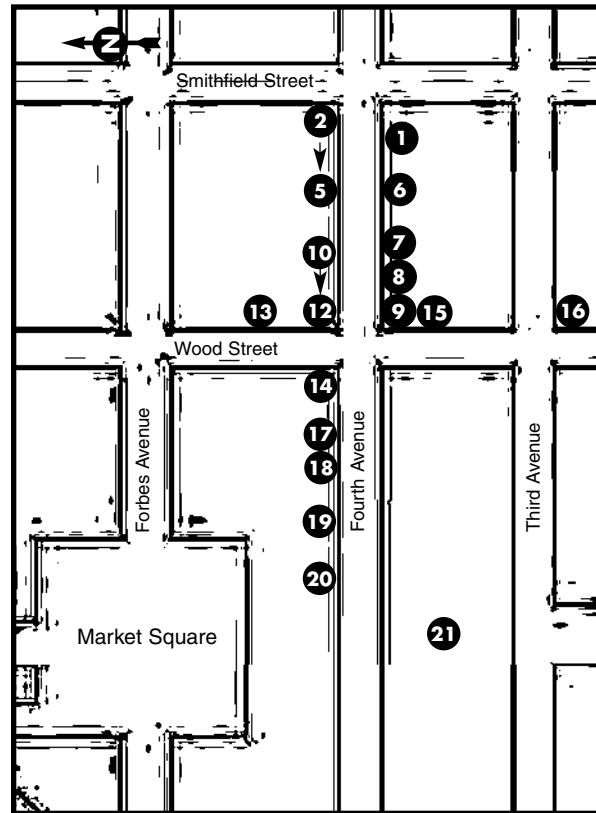
Here is a skyscraper of 1905 still evolving out of Victorian elaboration into a more modern simplicity. Although strong verticals dominate the composition for the greater part, the ornament of the spandrels between window levels and the elaborate cornices are carry-overs from the recent past. The choice of materials—light-colored granite, white brick and terra cotta—is in a more modern spirit. Pittsburgh architect Thomas H. Scott designed this building for H. Allen Machesney, an attorney, but it was purchased in 1913 by oil prospectors Michael Benedum and Joseph Trees. See the lobby.

## 20 Burke's Building 209 Fourth Avenue

The façade, at least, of the Burke's Building is the oldest work of high-style architecture in the city. Its year is 1836 (preceding the Great Fire of 1845); its style is Greek Revival; its architect was the English-born-and-trained John Chislett. The three-story landmark—the oldest business building in the city—is privately owned and the façade is protected in perpetuity from alteration through an easement with PHLF.

## 21 PPG Place Between Fourth Avenue and Third Avenue at Market Street

Completed in 1984, PPG Place is one of three downtown buildings made to show off the company product: the others being the former Alcoa Building and U.S. Steel Tower. Here, the general effect of the mirrored-glass Post-Modern buildings is Gothic, with 231 pinnacles. The 40-story tower is 680 feet high. The architects were John Burgee with Philip Johnson (New York). A fountain enlivens PPG Plaza in the summer (and an ice rink in the winter), thanks to a gift from the Hillman Foundation.



### Fourth Avenue Area, Downtown Pittsburgh

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Dollar Bank  | 12. The Bank Tower/First National Bank (People's Savings Bank Building) |
| 2. Standard Life Building (Pittsburgh Bank for Savings)     | 13. Point Park University Center (Colonial Trust Company)               |
| 3. Fidelity Building (Fidelity Trust Company)               | 14. Arrott Building   |
| 4. Pittsburgh Engineers' Building (Union Trust Company)     | 15. Wood Street Commons (YMCA Building)                                 |
| 5. Industrial Bank  | 16. Lawrence Hall (Keystone Athletic Club)                              |
| 6. Times Building (Magee Building)                          | 17. Centennial Building (Carpenter's Union Building)                    |
| 7. The Tech Center Bunker (Keystone Bank)                   | 18. Investment Building (Insurance Exchange)                            |
| 8. Commonwealth Trust Company                               | 19. Benedum-Trees Building (Machesney Building)                         |
| 9. The Carlyle (Union National Bank)                        | 20. Burke's Building  |
| 10. Point Park University Center (Colonial Trust Company)   | 21. PPG Place   |
| 11. Point Park University Center (Commercial National Bank) |   |

I think the architecture of this city makes it a very beautiful city on a very impressive scale. The vibrancy and positive feeling that you get when you come here is incredibly impressive.

—Christopher Nolan, Director, "The Dark Knight Rises," as quoted in *Pittsburgh City Paper* 08.03/08.10.2011

## FREE TOURS

### Old Allegheny County Jail Museum

Open Mondays through October (11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.)  
(except court holidays)

### Downtown Pittsburgh Walking Tours

Every Friday, May through September (Noon to 1:00 p.m.)

- September: Bridges & River Shores

### City Main Streets

Every Friday in October (Noon to 1:00 p.m.)  
Offered in cooperation with the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh

- October 5: Bloomfield
- October 12: Lawrenceville
- October 19: West End
- October 26: Strip District

## SPECIAL EVENTS

Not free. Reservations required. Space is limited.

Sept. 8: Dormont Walking Tour

Sept. 15: Behind-the-Scenes Heinz History Center Tour—**Filled**

Oct. 14: Shadyside Walking Tour—**Filled**

Oct. 20: Brierly/Berndtson House Tour (Bus)—**Filled**

Nov. 29: Lecture by Holly Brubach—"Forever Young: How Endless Possibility as an American Birthright Shapes Our Cities and Our Minds," co-sponsored by Carnegie Museum of Art, The Heinz Architectural Center

## FOR DETAILS OR RESERVATIONS

412-471-5808, ext. 527 or [marylu@phlf.org](mailto:marylu@phlf.org)  
[www.phlf.org](http://www.phlf.org)

Funding for PHLF's tour program is provided by the Alfred M. Oppenheimer Memorial Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation.



PITTSBURGH HISTORY & LANDMARKS FOUNDATION  
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## AUGUST FRIDAYS AT NOON

A **FREE** one-hour guided walking tour, compliments of the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation



## MEETING LOCATION

Parklet adjacent to Dollar Bank, at the corner of Smithfield and Fourth Avenue

Pittsburgh: Rated among *National Geographic Traveler's Best of the World* in 2012

[VisitPittsburgh.com](http://VisitPittsburgh.com)

For more information on local buildings and architects, purchase one of our books: 412-471-5808, ext. 525; [www.phlf.org](http://www.phlf.org)

## FOURTH AVENUE WALKING TOUR

Fourth Avenue was part of the city’s original street grid defined in 1784 by George Woods and Thomas Vickroy. The narrow 25-foot-wide street became Pittsburgh’s “Wall Street” in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

It was the discovery of oil by Colonel Drake in 1859 near Titusville that sparked Fourth Avenue’s development. The Pittsburgh Petroleum Exchange moved into a small bank building on Fourth Avenue in 1884. In 1886, it became the Pittsburgh Petroleum, Stock and Metal Exchange. Soon a continuous trade in nearly 1,200 Pittsburgh companies took place.

A survey of 1908, Pittsburgh’s Sesquicentennial year, showed 102 chartered banks and trust companies here: 35 national banks, 33 state banks, and 34 trust companies—a doubling of those that had existed 20 years before.

One of 16 National Register Districts in the city, Fourth Avenue showcases buildings designed by more than a dozen distinguished architects, in styles ranging from Greek Revival to Post Modern, constructed between 1836 and 1984. Tall buildings with banks on the ground level and aggressive little places of a couple of stories, dedicated solely to finance when built, now serve multiple new uses or are awaiting renovation.

**Note:** The current name of the building is listed first; the historical name most often associated with the building is given in parentheses.

### 1 Dollar Bank *340 Fourth Avenue*

This rather Baroque work of 1870 with double columns and conspicuous ornamentation is by Isaac Hobbs, a Philadelphian who designed a dozen houses for the Pittsburgh area. The material is Connecticut brownstone. The lions carved by Max Kohler in 1871 have been restored and are displayed inside the bank. Replicas are being made for the outdoor pedestals. The bank was enlarged and redecorated in 1906 by James T. Steen. Go inside to see the best preserved banking space in downtown Pittsburgh.

### 2 Standard Life Building (Pittsburgh Bank for Savings) *Smithfield Street and Fourth Avenue*

Many of the early skyscrapers in American cities were inspired by Italian Renaissance palazzos with dark stonework and exuberant Classical detailing. So is the case here, in a work of 1903 by Alden & Harlow, the city’s leading local architectural firm between 1896 and 1908. The lower part was first refaced in 1921. The upper stories of the building have been converted into bedroom units for students at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh.

### 3 Fidelity Building (Fidelity Trust Company) *341 Fourth Avenue*

Pittsburgh architect James T. Steen designed this building of 1889 in the Richardsonian Romanesque style: note the rough-faced granite, ornamental carving, and rounded arches. The bronze grillework is of a later time. The Art Institute also leases this building for student housing.

### 4 Pittsburgh Engineers’ Building (Union Trust Co.) *337 Fourth Avenue*

This building of 1898 was the first Pittsburgh work of the Chicago architects D. H. Burnham & Co.; the firm went on to design 10 more buildings in the city including Union Station, the Frick Building, and the Oliver Building. The combination of a cool and correct Grecian Doric temple front—notice the plain, cushion-shaped column capitals—with big, florid acroteria on the triangular pediment and the wall behind is typical for the 1900 period. This is now the headquarters of the Engineers’ Society of Western Pennsylvania.

### 5 Industrial Bank *333 Fourth Avenue*

Pittsburgh architect Charles M. Bartberger designed this Neo-classical “swagger bank” in 1903, using architectural rhetoric that proclaimed “Small but Oh my!” The Pittsburgh Stock Exchange was housed here from 1962 to 1974. Point Park University now owns the vacant building.

### 6 Times Building (Magee Building) *336 Fourth Avenue*

This Richardsonian Romanesque building, originally for the *Pittsburgh Times*, dates from 1892. It was the work of Frederick John Osterling, a prolific architect who was born and trained in Pittsburgh. He enlarged H.C. Frick’s home “Clayton” and H.H. Richardson’s Allegheny County Jail (that set the style for the Times Building), and designed the Union Trust Building on Grant Street and five buildings in the Fourth Avenue area. Incidentally, Pittsburgh’s first female architect, Elise Mercur, had her offices on the 7th floor of the Times Building from 1898 to 1900. Look east to see a wonderful view of the Times Building, Dollar Bank, and One Oxford Centre.

### 7 The Tech Center Bunker (Keystone Bank) *322 Fourth Avenue*

Boston-trained architects MacClure and Spahr established their Pittsburgh firm in 1901. Remodelings have compromised MacClure & Spahr’s original design of 1903: the center light court has been partially filled in and some windows have been totally bricked up. Fortunately, the lions still roar above the entrances and an eagle stands guard atop an immense keystone. J. J. Vandergrift (1827–99), the famous Pittsburgh riverboat captain and oil magnate, was president of Keystone Bank and a founder of the Pittsburgh Stock Exchange.

### 8 Commonwealth Trust Company *316 Fourth Avenue*

This 20-story skyscraper with colossal Ionic columns dates from 1906 and is by Osterling. (Ionic columns have a scroll-like ornament on the capital.) The former bank building is being renovated for condominiums.

### 9 The Carlyle (Union National Bank) *Fourth Avenue and Wood Street*

MacClure & Spahr introduced a new simplicity to the tall-building architecture of Fourth Avenue in the Union National Bank of 1906. The building materials are appreciably lighter than those used at the time, as well. The rounded corner has a power of its own. The interior lobby, though much remodeled, is impressive still, with its green Cipollino marble columns and ceilings with silver-dollar motifs. This was one of the first uses of Cipollino marble since antiquity, since the quarries reopened around 1905. The former bank building now houses 61 condominiums, including a penthouse. The façade is protected in perpetuity from alteration through an easement with the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation (PHLF).

### 10 Point Park University Center (Colonial Trust Co.) *317 Fourth Avenue*

This large institution had fronts on Fourth and Forbes Avenues that were built in 1902 to designs by Osterling. The Classical features of this building are the Corinthian columns, distinguished by capitals decorated with acanthus leaves; the cartouche, or ornamental tablet, above the entrance arch; and the triangular pediment. A third entrance is on Wood Street 13.

### 11 Point Park University Center (Commercial National Bank) *315 Fourth Avenue*

Here is a little bank of 1897 by Alden & Harlow that has lost its broad central arch but has retained much of its excellent Roman brick and unglazed terra cotta. Jamie Van Trump, co-founder of PHLF, described the bulls-eye wreaths as “circlets of joy and gladness.” This building is now part of the Point Park University Center.

### 12 The Bank Tower/First National Bank (People’s Savings Bank Building) *307 Fourth Avenue*

This tall building of 1901 by Alden & Harlow starts off with very emphatic rustication in pink granite, then continues in deep red brick with terra-cotta detailing that has deteriorated badly. As with the Pittsburgh Bank for Savings 2, these architects multiplied detailing as a response to the skyscraper challenge. The Fourth Avenue entrance lobby and 16-story stair are delicate in contrast, and to be seen. At the corner of Fourth and Wood, look up to see the entrance arches with sculptures by John Massey Rhind, who sculpted the bronze statues for the Carnegie Institute in Oakland in 1907.

### 13 Point Park University Center (Colonial Trust Co.) *414 Wood Street*

The Grecian Ionic front of the T-plan Colonial Trust Company is a 1926 work by Osterling, with a textbook correctness not found in his 1902 façades 10. The spacious skylit interior is framed in columns of Pavonazzo marble. The handsomely renovated University Center includes the library, television studio, classrooms, and GRW Theater.

### 14 Arrott Building *401 Wood Street*

Two hundred sixty feet high, typical of turn-of-the-century skyscrapers, this 1902 work by Osterling is highly ornamented with alternating bands of reddish-brown brick and white terra cotta. The top looks like a Venetian palace, with a massive cornice, stone balconies, and an elegant colonnade. See the lobby.

### 15 Wood Street Commons (YMCA Building) *304 Wood Street*

Edward J. Weber, who achieved success as an architect for the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, designed this classically-inspired building in 1923 for the architectural firm Janssen & Cocken. Near the entrance, a bronze marker indicates the crest of the St. Patrick’s Day Flood of 1936 and a plaque indicates the birthplace of industrialist William Thaw in 1818.

### 16 Lawrence Hall (Keystone Athletic Club) *Wood Street at Third Avenue*

Point Park University has restored the exterior and several interior public spaces of Lawrence Hall, designed by Janssen & Cocken in 1927. PHLF was instrumental in the restoration process, helping underwrite a restoration study and helping the University secure a lead grant from the Allegheny Foundation. The University, serving nearly 4,000 students, is effectively combining new construction and historic preservation to enhance its urban campus.

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