

## 17 Gulf Tower

*Trowbridge & Livingston (New York), architects;  
E. P. Mellon, associate architect, 1932*

This 44-story tower, originally constructed for the Gulf Oil Corporation, was the tallest in Pittsburgh until 1970. The architects went down 90 feet to find a proper footing for their great tower, then raised it in a sober Modernistic manner that began and ended with allusions to Classical architecture: a colossal doorway with a 50-ton granite entablature on Seventh Avenue and a limestone stepped-back pyramidal top that recalled the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus.

## 18 Federal Courthouse and Post Office

*Trowbridge & Livingston (New York), architects,  
with James A. Wetmore (Washington, D.C.), 1932*

During a \$68-million renovation in 2004-05, the exterior stonework was cleaned, six new courtrooms were added in the original building light wells, and an atrium was constructed to allow natural light to illuminate the new third-floor lobby space and historic fourth-floor courtrooms.

## 19 U.S. Steel Tower

*Harrison & Abramovitz (New York), architects, 1971*

At 841 feet high, U.S. Steel Tower was the tallest building between New York and Chicago when completed. (In 1987 Philadelphia's One Liberty Place Building at 945 feet became the first to surpass it.) U.S. Steel Tower has an exposed frame of Cor-Ten weathering steel (a U.S. Steel patent).

The 18 exterior columns that run the full height of the building are filled with a mixture of water, anti-freeze, and an anti-corrosive. The purpose of the fluid is to maintain a column temperature below a dangerous level during a fire.

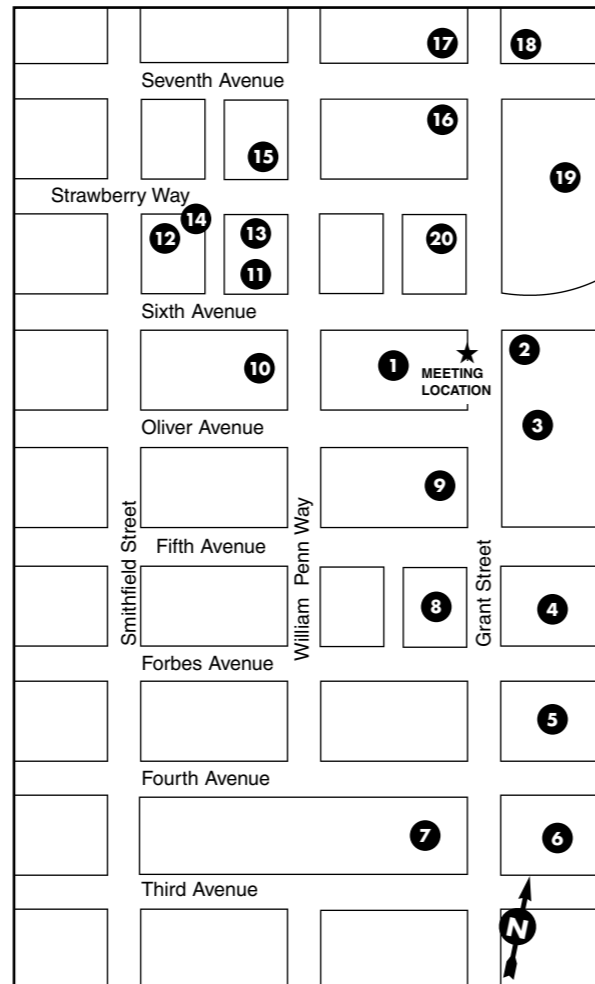
There is an acre of space on each floor; approximately 9,000 people work in the building; and there are 54 elevator cars, 11,000 windows, and 64 stories.

U.S. Steel Corporation and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) are headquartered here. UPMC leases 13 floors, including the top floor, and has branded its name on the exterior.

## 20 First Lutheran Church

*Andrew Peebles, architect, 1888*

When this church was built, Grant Street still had the air of a small-town main street, with Henry Hobson Richardson's new Courthouse and St. Paul's Cathedral (now demolished) by far its most imposing objects. The graceful dimensions of First Lutheran Church complement the massive Courthouse, and details of the church (such as the red mortar) echo Richardson's buildings.



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|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Omni William Penn Hotel     | 12. Smithfield United Church           |
| 2. Mellon Green                | 13. Allegheny HYP Club                 |
| 3. BNY Mellon Center           | 14. Strawberry Way houses              |
| 4. Allegheny County Courthouse | 15. Bell Atlantic Building             |
| 5. City-County Building        | 16. Koppers Building                   |
| 6. Grant Building              | 17. Gulf Tower                         |
| 7. One Oxford Centre           | 18. Federal Courthouse and Post Office |
| 8. Frick Building              | 19. U.S. Steel Tower                   |
| 9. Union Trust Building        | 20. First Lutheran Church              |
| 10. Mellon Square              |  |
| 11. Regional Enterprise Tower  |  |

There's a simple rule about American cities. The best ones are those set within tight physical limits. . . . Pittsburgh falls emphatically into the first category. . . . Compact and muscular, it is one of America's few real walking cities.

—Rupert Cornwell, "Steel Town" shows US the art of survival  
(*The Independent*, February 27, 2011)

## FREE TOURS

### Old Allegheny County Jail Museum

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

### Downtown Pittsburgh Walking Tours

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

There is a different walking tour each month.

### Oakland Civic Center Walking Tours

Every Friday in October (Noon to 1:00 p.m.)

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### August Wilson's Hill District Walking Tour

Sat., June 4, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

### Grant Street Walking Tour: From Firstside to Liberty

Sat., June 25, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

### Allegheny River Bridges & Point State Park Walking Tour

Sat., July 16, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

### Bus Tour to Woodville, the John Roberts House, and Plantation Plenty

Sat., July 23, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

### Behind-the-Scenes Tour of the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh\*

Wed., Sept. 14, 10:30 a.m. to Noon

or Sat., Sept. 17, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.

### Four Special Pittsburgh Houses\*

Sat., Oct. 15, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

\* *Tours for members only; please join!*

## FOR DETAILS OR RESERVATIONS

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

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PITTSBURGH HISTORY & LANDMARKS FOUNDATION  
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# DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH GRANT STREET WALKING TOUR



## MAY FRIDAYS AT NOON

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



## MEETING LOCATION

Grant Street near Sixth Avenue, at the Omni William Penn Hotel entrance

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# GRANT STREET WALK

**Pittsburgh especially is a city of monuments to its great industrialists who left behind them not only steel mills, factories and banks, but also a number of huge buildings which perpetuate their names. Frick, Carnegie, Oliver and Phipps resound in the city’s architectural as well as its financial annals. Like the princes of the Renaissance, the masters of these great fortunes loved to build. In steel, marble and granite is memorialized much of the history of Pittsburgh’s Age of the Moguls.**

—James D. Van Trump, “*The Skyscraper as Monument*”  
(*The Charette*; 43:4, April 1963)

With its concentration of major historic buildings and modern skyscrapers, Grant Street is downtown Pittsburgh’s showcase thoroughfare. A section of Grant Street, between Forbes and Seventh avenues, is part of the *Pittsburgh Central Downtown National Register Historic District*, which also includes significant buildings west of Grant Street. This tour will visit some of these buildings and a unique urban garden located in the Historic District. Grant Street takes its name from Grant’s Hill—once 60 feet high and occupying the area between Oliver and Fourth avenues. Grant’s Hill was named for British Major James Grant, who was defeated there by the French and Indians in September 1758. Two months later, on November 25, 1758, British General John Forbes succeeded in wresting control of this area from the French. Forbes named Pittsburgh in honor of British statesman Sir William Pitt the Elder, who devised the military strategy so the British could beat the French in this region and around the world.

Grant’s Hill formed a natural eastern boundary to 18th-century Pittsburgh, but its height was an impediment to development. In the late 1830s, in order to accommodate construction of a new County jail and courthouse and to provide access for fire equipment and public transit, the top of the hill—“the Hump”—was lowered; by 1911 some 45 feet of earth had been removed, and by 1913 the remaining 15 feet had been excavated.

The oldest surviving buildings on Grant Street are the present Allegheny County Courthouse (1884–88) and the First Lutheran Church (1887–88). They would be joined in the first decades of the 20th century by “monumental” buildings devoted to industrial management, commercial activity, banking, hospitality, and government. Grant Street was widened in 1929, and in 1990 an end-to-end scheme of paving, planting, and lighting was completed.

**1 Omni William Penn Hotel**  
*Janssen & Abbott, architects, 1916; Janssen & Cocken, architects, 1929; Urban Room, Joseph Urban, 1929*

This classic big-city hotel is distinguished by the Art Deco Urban Room on the 17th floor. Deep light courts (easily noticed from Mellon Square) allow the maximum number of guest rooms to have natural ventilation and outdoor views. During a \$22 million renovation in 2004, many of the building’s original elements were restored.

**2 Mellon Green**  
*Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann, architects, and MTR Landscape Architects, 2002*

This public park gives a campus feel to the BNY Mellon Financial Center complex and provides an amenity for Pittsburgh’s central business district. The fountain was designed by Geoffrey L. Rausch. The granite monoliths symbolize the strength and stability of Pittsburgh. A tree-lined promenade of rustic terrazzo and granite paving leads to one of four downtown “T” (transit) stations.

**3 BNY Mellon Center**  
*Welton Becket Associates (Los Angeles, later New York), architects, 1983*

The steel-plate walls help brace the frame of this 54-story skyscraper, respectfully designed to pay homage to Richardson’s Allegheny County Courthouse.

**4 Allegheny County Courthouse**  
*Henry Hobson Richardson (Brookline, Mass.), architect, 1884–88; alterations*

The Allegheny County Courthouse and former Jail are among Pittsburgh’s most famous buildings. Richardson died in 1886, two years before the Courthouse was finished. On his deathbed Richardson is reported to have said: “If they honor me for the pigmy things I have already done, what will they say when they see Pittsburgh finished.”

At times both the Courthouse and the Jail have been threatened, but their most visible features have always been defended. The Jail was renovated between 1999 and 2001 to house the Allegheny County family and juvenile courts.

**5 City-County Building**  
*Henry Hornbostel, with Edward B. Lee, architects, 1917*

Hornbostel (NYC) won the 1904 competition for Carnegie Technical Schools (now CMU). More than 50 of the buildings and monuments he designed for Pittsburgh remain.

His City-County Building is Classical in style—vaulted, columned, measured—though the detailing is very largely original. The ground-floor corridor is one of Pittsburgh’s great interior spaces. The 43-foot-tall by 150-foot-long passage is lined with bronze-encased columns. Elevator doors show figures holding the three Allegheny County courthouses and the three Pittsburgh city halls.

**6 Grant Building**  
*Henry Hornbostel and Eric Fisher Wood, architects, 1930*

This building has lost some exterior detailing and inner space, but its neon beacon continues to flash P-I-T-T-S-B-U-R-G-H in Morse code, as it did in 1930.

**7 One Oxford Centre**  
*Hellmuth, Obata, Kassabaum (New York), architects, 1983*

This 46-story skyscraper was built as a cluster of octagons to maximize the number of corner offices.

**8 Frick Building**  
*D. H. Burnham & Co. (Chicago), architects, 1902*

Henry Clay Frick made a number of major real-estate investments that resulted in construction of a close-set group of buildings in the Grant Street area: the Frick Building, the Frick Annex (now the Allegheny Building), Union Arcade, and the first part of the William Penn Hotel. In the Frick Building, the earliest of these, he created a personal monument and the location of his own office. The tall new building that was finished in 1902 put an end to the 14-year dominance of the Pittsburgh skyline by the Courthouse directly across the street.

Look inside for a marble bust of Frick by Malvina Hoffman, bronze lions by A. Phimister Proctor, and *Fortune*, in glass, by John LaFarge.

**9 Union Trust Building**  
*Frederick John Osterling, architect, 1917*

Note the roof: Flemish Gothic realized in virtuosic terra cotta work. Originally called the Union Arcade, it had space inside for 240 shops, facing two four-story open arcade spaces, and about 700 offices. The office floors were built with a strength remarkable today, since tenants were apt to bring in massive iron safes and locate them as they pleased. See the dramatic interior space: a ten-story atrium with an art-glass skylight by Rudy Brothers.

**10 Mellon Square**  
*Mitchell & Ritchey, architects, 1955*

The Mellon family donated a block of downtown real estate in 1949 to create this one-acre park with terrazzo walks, fountain cascades, and granite benches above a six-level underground parking garage. Mellon Square was the world’s first urban space to incorporate a park, shops, and underground garage in one design. Mellon Square also serves as a fine architecture-viewing platform. Notice the old Gimbel’s department store, now Heinz 57 Center (Starrett & Van Vleck, 1914); the Henry W. Oliver Building (D. H. Burnham & Co., 1910) that terminates in a pilastered arcade; the Park Building (George B. Post, 1896) with crouching figures of Atlas beneath its cornice; and the former Mellon Bank building (Trowbridge & Livingston, 1924) whose magnificent interior was destroyed for the short-lived Lord & Taylor’s department store.

**11 Regional Enterprise Tower**  
*Harrison & Abramovitz (New York), architects, 1953*

Originally constructed for Alcoa, this corporate headquarters building was intended to show off as many applications of aluminum as possible. Here, aluminum siding made its debut in high-style construction. In 1998, Alcoa constructed a new building on the North Shore along the Allegheny River and donated this building to serve as the headquarters for various nonprofit organizations serving the region.

**12 Smithfield United Church**  
*Henry Hornbostel, architect, 1925*

Hornbostel finished off an eclectic Gothic composition with an openwork spire that represents a very early architectural use of aluminum.

**13 Allegheny HYP Club**  
*Edward B. Lee, architect, 1930*

1890-period workers’ houses were remodeled to provide a gracious courtyard and cozy interiors for what was originally the Harvard-Yale-Princeton Club. The club membership is now open to graduates from any college or university. The rose window of the Smithfield United Church makes an impressive backdrop ornament to this picturesque scene.

**14 Strawberry Way houses**  
*C. 1850*

This alley is a remarkable medley of plain and fancy, tiny and colossal, thrown together by the whimsy of change.

**15 Bell Atlantic Building**  
*Alden & Harlow, 1905 addition; James T. Windrim (Philadelphia), 1915, 1923, 1931 additions*

This building complex, begun in red brick c. 1890 by Frederick John Osterling for the Bell Telephone Company, was greatly expanded with several additions faced in stone.

A one-story covered walk at Strawberry Way, with shallow vaults in green-and-cream Guastavino tile and limestone piers, is not only a handsome space in itself but frames the view of the old and tiny houses opposite.

**16 Koppers Building**  
*Graham, Anderson, Probst & White (Chicago), architects, 1929*

The successor firm to D. H. Burnham & Co. designed a suave Art Deco headquarters for a progressive industrial firm. The limestone facing of the building, like the tall lobby spaces inside with their colored marbles and ornamented bronzework, suggests a cool urbanity remote from industrial toil. The crowning chateau roof, being made of copper, can be taken as a pun, while the lobby mailbox is a doll’s house version of the whole building, roof included.