

The Pennsylvania Capitol

A SELF- GUIDED TOUR



A National Historic Landmark

Pennsylvania's Capitol building was officially opened Oct. 4, 1906, replacing a building that had been destroyed by fire in 1897.

Designed by architect Joseph Miller Huston, the building was heralded by President Theodore Roosevelt as "the handsomest Capitol I ever saw" at its dedication ceremony.

Today, the Capitol, with the addition of a modern East Wing in 1987, covers 5.5 acres. The five-story building, faced with Vermont granite, is a "palace of art," as envisioned by its architect. To fulfill his dream, Huston commissioned some of the finest artists of the day to fill the Capitol with their works.

More importantly, however, the building is a functional seat of government, where laws are passed and public policy is set for over 12 million residents of Pennsylvania. Visitors are welcome to explore the Capitol building at their leisure. This pamphlet highlights some of the more historically significant and beautiful rooms open to the public.

Rotunda

The Capitol Rotunda, featuring a 272-foot high, 52-million pound dome, modeled after St. Peter's in Rome, is the showpiece of the building.

The dome's interior is ringed by Edwin Austin Abbey medallions representing art, law, religion and science. Four larger Abbey murals, representing the state's primary industries at the time the Capitol was built – coal, oil and steel, as well as William Penn's ships coming to the New World – can be seen in the semi-circular lunettes. Of particular significance is the "Spirit of Light," which features women carrying flames against a backdrop of oil derricks, suggesting that Pennsylvania brings light to the world in two ways: through the production of oil, and through the message of religious freedom espoused by the state's founder, William Penn.

The sweeping Carrara marble staircase was inspired by the staircase at the Paris Opera.

The floor is laid with Pennsylvania-made tiles, produced by Doylestown craftsman Henry Chapman Mercer at his Mercer Tileworks. A total of 377 mosaics can be found in the flooring. The tiles are set chronologically, beginning with Indian activities and artifacts and ending with such "modern devices" as the automobile and the telephone.

The House corridor running from the Rotunda is lined with William Brantley Van Ingen paintings depicting religious groups that played a role in the founding of the Commonwealth.

The walls of the Senate corridor are lined with 14 paintings by Vincent Maragliotti, depicting transportation and industry in Pennsylvania.

House Chamber

The House of Representatives meets in the Hall of the House.

Philadelphia native William Brantley Van Ingen designed the 14 stained-glass windows, each weighing 200 pounds. Framed in gold-leaf, they represent themes such as education, justice and abundance.

The walls are dominated by murals executed by Edwin Austin Abbey, another Philadelphia native. The largest mural in the Capitol, Abbey's "The Apotheosis," is located directly behind the Speaker of the House's podium. It spans 35 feet square and includes explorers, intellectual, spiritual and military leaders from the state's past. William Penn stands at the center of the work, with Benjamin Franklin, in blue, at his side.

The Speaker of the House sits in a chair specially designed by the Capitol's architect. The desks are mahogany, and date back to the Capitol's construction.

The marble is from the Pyrenees Mountains in France.

Senate Chamber

Ground-breaking female artist Violet Oakley was just 28 when she was commissioned to paint inside the Capitol. Her paintings that line the walls of the Senate Chamber focus on the creation and preservation of the Union, and took more than eight years to complete.

The Senate Chamber also features Van Ingen stained glass windows, representing the arts, sciences and industries.

The desks, constructed of mahogany from Belize, date back to 1906. The drapes weigh 87 pounds per pair; the bronze light fixtures weigh two tons each.

The green marble lining the walls, called Connemara, is imported from Ireland.

Supreme Court

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court meets in this room to decide questions of constitutionality.

The dome was designed and executed by Alfred Godwin, a Pennsylvania native.

Art that adorns the walls was painted by Violet Oakley. A close look at the painting above the door, "Divine Law," reveals the words "love," "law," and "wisdom." To the right of "Divine Law" is "Scale of Law," in which Oakley compared law to the musical scale.

The Supreme Court chamber contains one of about 150 "keystone clocks." The face features the seal of Pennsylvania, and the glass is in the shape of a keystone, Pennsylvania's symbol.

Governor's Reception Room

Pennsylvania's governor uses this room for news conferences, meetings and receptions. The table at the front of the room is used for bill signings; the chairs and table are hand-tooled Spanish leather.

The grandfather clock, over 100 years old, is from the home of former Gov. Daniel Hastings, who served in 1897 when the previous Capitol was destroyed by fire.

The paintings, which depict the history of religious liberty in England and the rise of Quakers, were executed by Violet Oakley.

East Wing

The East Wing was opened in 1987 to add almost 400,000 square-feet of functional space to the Capitol. It houses almost 100 legislative offices, rooms for public hearings and a large public restaurant, as well as the building's interactive Welcome Center.

The East Wing's "mini-dome" skylight echoes the large dome in the Rotunda; the wing also includes hand-laid Mercer tiles, similar in appearance to those in the older section of the building.

The structure, designed by Thomas C. Celli of Pittsburgh, won the Classical America Award for architecture in 1986. The exterior granite is from the same quarry used on the Main Capitol.

Fountain/Soldier's Grove

A plaza behind the East Wing, with its 68-foot, computer-controlled fountain, is dedicated to Pennsylvania veterans.

Across Commonwealth Avenue, veterans are also honored in Soldier's Grove, a park memorializing Medal of Honor recipients from Pennsylvania who gave their lives in service to others. Each band of concrete marks a conflict in which Pennsylvania residents have participated, spaced to symbolize the time between military actions. The names of individuals who received the Medal of Honor are inlaid in each band.

Farther east, tall pillars mark the entrance to Soldiers and Sailors Bridge, also dedicated to Pennsylvanians who served in the Armed Forces.

Welcome Center

The Welcome Center was opened in 1995 to help the Capitol's thousands of visitors get acquainted with the building and the work done within its walls.

The center features interactive displays explaining the personalities and events that have shaped, and are shaping, the Commonwealth.

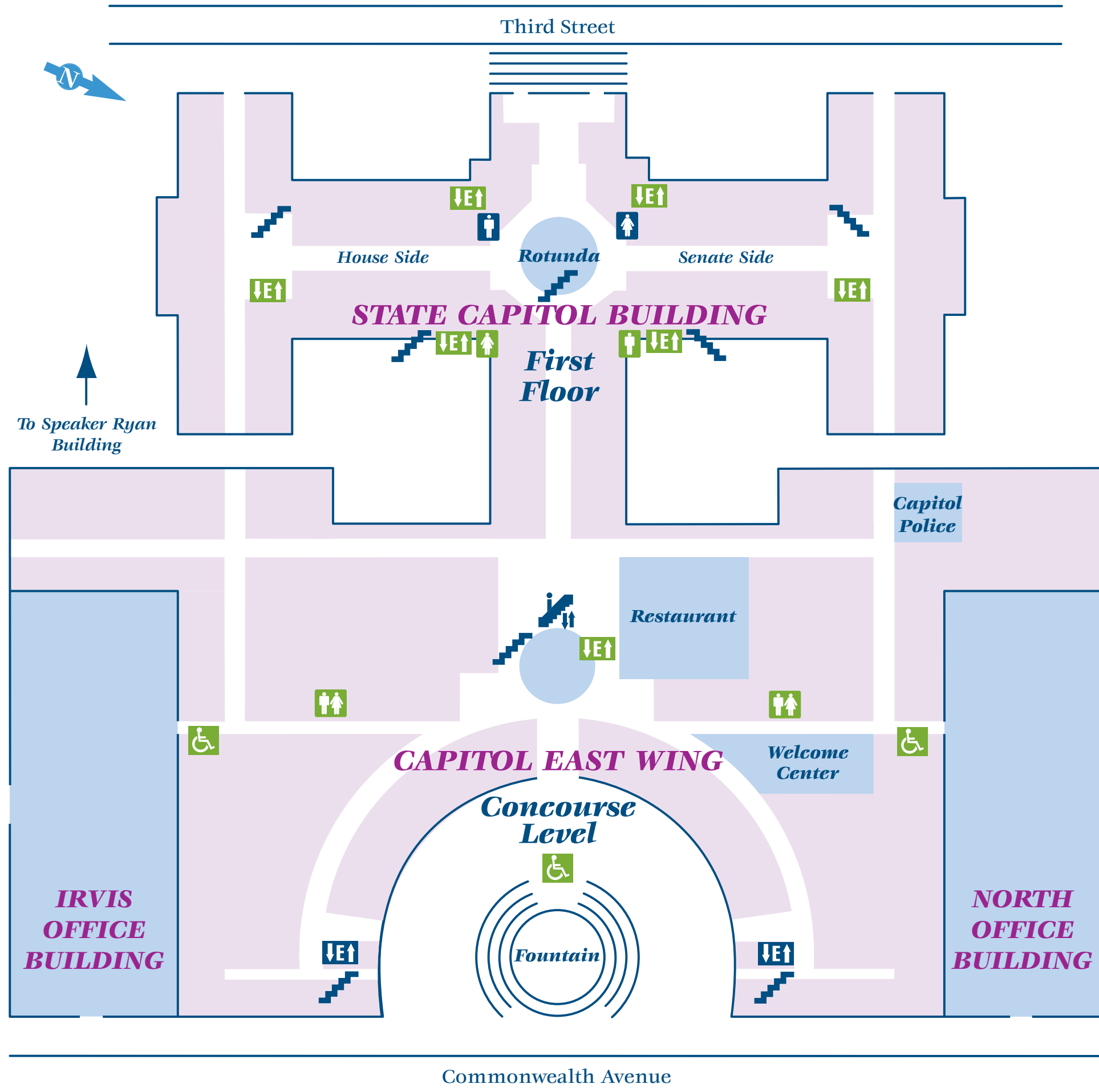
Scheduling a Tour

Guided tours of the Capitol are offered every half hour, Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Weekends and most holidays, tours are offered 9:00 and 11:00 a.m., and 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. If your group numbers more than ten, please call for advance reservations: 1-800-TOURNPA OR 717-787-6810. The Welcome Center is available during the tour schedule. Schedule subject to change without notice. If you require auxiliary aids or services, please contact us. Some aids and services require advance notice.

CONTINUED

This simplified map of the Capitol is designed to provide basic information about the general location of important rooms and facilities, such as restrooms, elevators and stairways. Following is a list of rooms and their locations.

Please note: In the State Capitol building, all 500 room numbers are on the entresol (E) floor; all 600 room numbers are on the 5th floor.



ADA Coordinators:

House of Representatives(717) 772-5140
 (TT) 1-800-929-2164
 Senate(717) 787-7163
 (TT) 1-800-364-1581

Capitol Police

Rm. 70, Concourse Level East Wing

Document (Bill) Rooms

Basement of Capitol

Governor's Office & Reception Room

2nd Floor, House side

Governor's Press Office

Rm. 308, House side

House Chief Clerk

Rm. 129, House side

House Gallery

4th Floor, Rotunda

House Majority Caucus Room

Rm. 140, House side

House Minority Caucus Room

Rm. 425, House side

Legislative Reference Bureau

Rm. 641, Senate side

Lt. Governor's Office

Rm. 200, Rotunda

Media Center

Rm. 1, Concourse Level East Wing

News Room

Rm. 524 Entresol (E) Floor, Rotunda

President Pro Tempore

Rm. 292, Senate side

Restaurant

Concourse Level East Wing

Senate Chief Clerk

Rm. 89, East Wing

Senate Gallery

4th Floor, Rotunda

Senate Library

Rm. 157, Senate side

Senate Majority Caucus Room

Rm.156, Senate side

Senate Minority Caucus Room

Rm. 260, Rotunda

Senate Secretary

Rm. 462, Senate side

Speaker of the House

Rm. 139, House side

Supreme/Superior Court Room

4th Floor, Rotunda

Welcome Center

Concourse Level East Wing

 Elevator
 Escalator
 Restrooms
 Stairs
 Accessible

All symbols in **GREEN** are accessible