



Walking Tour #1: Notable Architecture of Downtown Lewisburg

Lewisburgpa.com Walking Tour #1: Notable Architecture of Downtown Lewisburg

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, downtown Lewisburg hosts many examples of fine architecture. This walking tour contains information gleaned from walking tours previously organized by the Lewisburg Civic and Garden Club, from Ken LeVan and Ted Strosser, and from Charles M. Snyder's wonderful book, *Union County Pennsylvania: A Celebration of History*. The tour starts on the corner of Market and North 5th Streets. It is worthwhile to try observing these buildings up close *and* from across the street when possible, though special care should be taken when crossing at the intersection of Market and Water Streets, as there is no pedestrian signal at this corner. Also, try taking this tour at night when many downtown edifices are dramatically lit, both inside and out. Look up, Lewisburg! Look up!

We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us.
— Winston Churchill

1. The Chamberlain Building — 434 Market Street.

Style: Iron Front Commercial. *Year of construction:* 1855, renovated in the 1870's.

Elements of the original Federal style of this building can be seen along N. 5th Street. The addition of the iron front was part of the 1870's renovation. A building technology rather than an architectural style, this technique employed iron in a new structural form which allowed large openings, principally along a street front. These structures were often loft buildings with ground-floor commercial establishments and some type of light manufacturing on the upper floors. Beaux Arts style elements can be seen in the decoration and the rounded arches and columns. (This style is exemplified in Sun Bank building, which we will soon visit.)

2. The Campus Theatre — 413 Market Street.

Style: Art Deco. *Year of construction:* 1940.

In the Art Deco style, new materials and technologies were used in new ways to streamline architecture. Glazed tiles, glass block, steel windows, aluminum and neon lights combine to produce forms which often reflected the ideals of the building's inhabitants. This style was often associated with transportation, theaters, and skyscrapers. Lewisburg is fortunate to be home to such a fine example of this treasured style. In 2004, the theatre underwent a major restoration project. Painstaking efforts were taken to return to the facade and marquee to their original Art Deco glory. Stand opposite this lovely theatre at dusk, when the marquee lights spring to life, and see why the Campus Theatre has earned its nickname, "The Jewel of Market Street".

3. Sun Bank — 311 Market Street.

Style: Beaux Arts (bo-zärt'). *Year of construction:* 1899.

This style is also sometimes referred to as Renaissance Revival. It employs classical Greek and Roman forms and is often thought of as a continuation, rather than a revival, of the Renaissance. Beaux Arts is an eclectic Neo-Classical style that often uses symmetrical compositions. Notice the elaborate stone frieze and brackets, and the Ionic columns; with their elegant fluted shafts, detailed bases and scroll-like volutes at their capitals. Note as well the rounded windows, round arches connecting the columns, and the metal cross-hatched grilles on the windows.



4. Post Office — Southwest corner of S. 3rd and Market Streets

Style: Neo-Classical. Year of construction: 1932.

The Neo-Classical style is an evolution of the Greek Revival style we will see later in this tour. Many Greek Revival elements are used in the Neo-Classical style, but at different scales and in combination with new elements. Notice the simple, sturdy-looking Doric columns. In the Doric order, columns do not have bases, the shafts have flutes that meet in sharp ridges (rather than the flat ridges seen in the Ionic order) and the capitals are convex and cushion-like. Doric columns can also be seen across N. 3rd Street on the Sovereign Bank building.

5. First Baptist Church — Northwest corner of S. 3rd & St Louis Streets.

Style: Gothic Revival. Year of construction: 1870.

This church exemplifies the Gothic Revival style, one of the most popular architectural styles of the mid 19th century. Begun in England in the mid 1700's to romanticize medieval styles, Gothic Revival was a popular style for churches in the United States through the 1940s. This church's steeply pitched roof, simple facade, pointed-arch stained glass windows, buttressed walls, and tall, thin spire are all characteristic of this style. The dark exterior stones are hornfels; a hard, very fine-grained rock that has cooled and solidified from liquid magma after intruding into, and forming a vein within, surrounding rock.

6. Beaver Memorial United Methodist Church — Northeast corner of South 3rd & St Louis Streets.

Style: Ruskinian Gothic. Year of construction: 1890.

The Ruskinian Gothic style is named for John Ruskin, an English architectural critic and social reformer who disdained what he perceived to be the increasing emphasis on function over form in the architecture and engineering of his day. The Ruskinian Gothic style celebrates, and builds upon, the elaborate and decorative nature of late Medieval architecture. Notice the asymmetrical design of this buff sandstone church. Note details such as the ornamental finial at the top of the church's spire and roof peak. Contrast these with the regularity of the Beaux Arts bank and Neo-Classical Post Office buildings we have seen on this tour. Gothic architecture, Ruskin believed, allowed a significant degree of creative freedom and artistic expression. Enjoy the creative expression manifested in this beautiful building.

*“When we build, let us think that we build forever . . .
For, indeed, the greatest glory of a building
is not in its stones, nor in its gold. Its glory is in its Age.”
— John Ruskin*

7. Christ's Evangelical Lutheran Church — Southeast corner of S. 3rd & St Louis Streets.

Style: Richardsonian Romanesque. Year of construction: 1902.

Romanesque architecture predated the Gothic architecture of the middle ages. As interest in religion grew, the need for larger churches led European architects to devise ways to merge the familiar Roman architecture of the past with new methods of construction. These methods of construction, as they were refined, developed into the Gothic architecture we have already discussed. The Richardsonian Romanesque style of the late 19th century interpreted the heavier Romanesque architecture into a distinctly different style. Architect Henry Hobson Richardson created an individual style which abandoned the vertical silhouettes and smooth stone facings of earlier



times. Richardsonian Romanesque is characterized by a massive appearance featuring roughly textured horizontal forms. The style was widely popular for churches, university buildings, railway stations, and courthouses. Notice the rough appearance of the red sandstone facade, the broad round arches; the squat, square, medieval looking tower, the smaller windows, deeper door openings and the general absence of carved or applied ornament. Consider these elements in comparison with the two other churches we have just examined.

8. Union County Court House — Southwest corner of S. 2nd & St Louis Streets.

Style: Greek Revival. Year of construction: 1856-57.

The Greek Revival style, which drew inspiration from ancient Greek temples, is bold, formal and simple. Popular throughout the 19th century, the Greek Revival style is well suited for churches, schools, government buildings, and houses. Note the corner pilasters (flattened columns that stand out in relief from the wall); imposing columns with Ionic capitals; and the classical triangular pediment with Greek dentils above the capitals. A fine example of a cupola, with recently restored copper roof, houses the bell donated by Simon Cameron, Secretary of War in President Lincoln's cabinet.

*"On arriving at a town, the first thing is to buy the plan of the town,
and the book noting its curiosities. Walk round the ramparts when there are any,
go to the top of a steeple to have a view of the town.*

*When you are doubting whether a thing is worth the trouble of going to see,
recollect that you will never again be so near it."*

— Thomas Jefferson

9. Cronrath Funeral Home — 106 S. 2nd Street (Southeast corner of S. 2nd & St Louis Streets.)

Style: Queen Anne . Year of construction: 1888.

One of the most eclectic nineteenth-century styles, the Queen Anne style often displays many of the elements seen here: decorative wooden shingles beneath gables, a terra cotta roof crest shaped in metal like scales on a dragon's back, a multi-colored slate roof, fish scale shingles under the gable facing S. 2nd Street, a peculiar isolated gable arising from the roof on the North side and leaded and stained glass windows.

10. Tuscan Villa — 60 S. 2nd Street.

Style: Italianate. Year of construction: 1869.

One of the many romantic styles popular in the latter part of the nineteenth century, this style is characterized here by the deep roof overhang with carved brackets, corner quoins, tall and narrow windows with interesting mullions, shaped window hoods ending in a drop at the sides, decoratively carved fascia boards beneath the roof with oval lie-on-your-stomach windows, and an arched double-door entrance.



11. Residence — 43 S. 2nd Street

Style: Federal Brick. *Year of construction:* 1846.

Federal architecture came to Lewisburg in the early 19th century. Typically employing brick construction, these structures paid particular attention to proportions and symmetry. Note the narrow overhang of the roof with no decorative brackets, and the symmetry of the main facade. This building also has many unusual features not typical of the Federal style: three story construction, hard-fired brick facing with tight joints and slender rows of mortar, (but with sides of soft-fired brick), window ledges of marble, (unlike the more economical stone or wood) and larger windows than in earlier Federal houses. Notice also the raised visible basement faced with stone and the attached two-story section, both atypical of the Federal style.

12. Residence — 37-39 S. 2nd Street

Style: Early Federal. *Year of construction:* 1830's.

This Early Federal structure is typical of early Lewisburg, before the building boom of 1842-1860. Note the wooden clapboard, overall simplicity and doorways that open directly onto the street.

13. Cameron House — 201 Market Street.

Style: Queen Anne. *Year of construction:* 1828, renovated in 1887.

This residence was originally built in the Federal style and housed a bank until 1880, the vault of which still exists in the house. In 1887, the house was renovated into the Queen Anne style and a matching carriage house was added. The carriage house is one of only a few such structures in the United States *not* converted to a residence. Note the mansion's ridge crests, its tower with conical roof, balconies, and multiple gables. Brownstone, terra cotta and hard-fired brick embellish the front of the structure, while a third floor ballroom hides inside. This house was scheduled for demolition to make room for a gas station in 1959, but it was purchased and saved by Betty Cook.

*If cities were built by the sound of music,
then some edifices would appear to be constructed by grave, solemn tones,
and others to have danced forth to light fantastic airs.*

— Nathaniel Hawthorne

14. Bradley Shoemaker Gallery — 202 Market Street.

Style: Shingle Queen Anne. *Year of construction:* 1812, renovated in 1890.

This style is often associated with the grand mansions used as "summer homes" — such as those in Newport, Rhode Island, and locally in Eagles Mere. The most obvious indicator of this style is the used of wood shingles on vertical wall surfaces, often with decorative overlays. This building's original structure was of logs slabs, chinked with mortar and horsehair. A house in the Federal style was rebuilt around it in about 1812. A renovation in 1890 gave the house its present-day Queen Anne flavor. Observe the curved tower with concave glass panes and a conical roof with fancy shingles. Blue colored glass in diamond shaped windows decorate the east side. A pharmacy was housed here, in continuous operation from 1845 to 1990 — a record in the United States!



15. Lewisburg Hotel — 136 Market Street.

Style: Federal. *Year of construction:* 1834, renovated in 1890, 1938, 1995-97.

Originally two stories, with a third and fourth story added in subsequent renovations (the fourth story was added to accommodate the addition of an elevator). A Mt. Vernon style portico was added in 1938 by local architect Malcolm Clinger. The 1997 renovation successfully united the hotel with the smaller motel behind it, including replacing a flat roof with the gabled roof with dormers we see today. The interior of the beautifully restored Lewisburg Hotel is well worth visiting.

16. The Lewisburg Club — 131 Market Street.

Style: Romanesque Revival. *Year of construction:* 1858, renovated in 1906.

This building offers us another glimpse of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Its three-story brick structure is overlaid with rustic yellow sandstone and accented with brownstone, a hard dark sandstone. Notice the striking overhanging bay window at the second floor level and the lovely stained glass as well.

17. First Presbyterian Church — 18 Market Street.

Style: Greek Revival. *Year of construction:* 1856.

This is Lewisburg's finest example of Greek Revival Architecture, with its beautiful spire and belfry with curved supporting brackets, tall entablature with fluted columns and Ionic capitals, a fan-lighted door, a pediment, dentils and other Classical details. Note the Neo-Classical Himmelreich Library next door, which was designed to conform with the Greek Revival architecture of the church.

18. Packwood House Museum — 10-12 Market Street.

Style: Federal. *Year of construction:* 1790, renovated in 1866,1892,1936.

Built as a log house in 1790, this house was converted in 1866 into the Federal style with wooden clapboard and a top floor addition. In 1892, Italianate details like window hoods were added and it was converted to a 3-family dwelling. John and Edith Fetherston purchased the home and restored it to a single-family home in 1936. The Fetherstons left their home and collections in a trust and, in accordance with their wills, the Packwood House Museum opened to the public in 1976. The museum is open for guided tours (including an architectural tour of an excavated portion of the original log construction) and special gallery exhibits.

19. 37 South Water Street.

Style: Stone. *Year of construction:* 1786.

The earliest homes in the county which remain largely unaltered are the stone houses. Built both in the towns and as farmsteads, a few very good examples survive locally. This is the oldest stone house still standing in Lewisburg and one of the few houses built in the 1700's left in our town. A log annex (now covered with shingles) attached to the house on the south side was originally a store, and later served as the first school in Lewisburg. This annex then became a gathering place for political discussions. Today it serves as a kitchen. Consider the countless changes that have taken place in and outside of this quaint stone house and observe the river behind you, which has been its constant companion. And remember,

A doctor can bury his mistakes, but an architect can only advise his client to plant vines.

— Frank Lloyd Wright

