

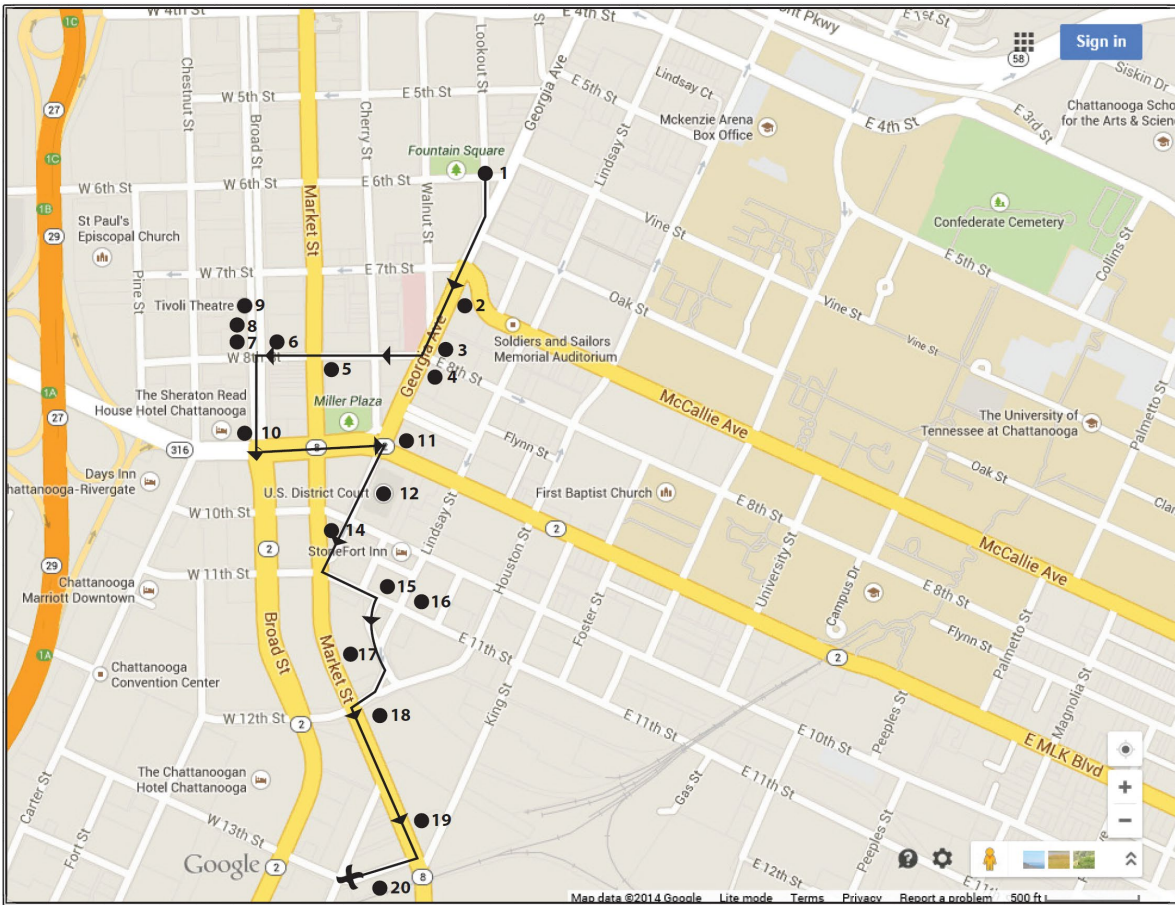
Chattanooga Architectural Walking Tour

Chattanooga's history – the built environment, people who have lived, worked, worshipped and died here, is not unlike the stories of other places in North America that over the course of 400 years have grown from Native Indian villages to thriving urban areas. Every large city, and many small towns, in Tennessee have that same past whether it's Knoxville, Nashville, Clarksville, or Memphis. All are located on major rivers that played a role in their development. All supplanted native populations. All were built and rebuilt numerous times by the wealth generated through commerce. The road grids that still today make up our cityscapes continue to lead all of those who ventured into town back to the wharf, or in the case of Chattanooga, the river landing. We still pay deference to the very rivers that spawned these places. The natural corridors of travel and trade have been enhanced and added to over the generations by artificial networks that seek to accomplish the same task, but with more efficiency, such as railroads, interstates and airports. No matter their effectiveness, they each have influenced the growth of our cities.

Chattanooga, over the past 175 years, has lived, died and been reborn multiple times based on the whims of the river. Until flooding was contained in the 1930s, the city faced threats on many occasions. By comparison, Chicago had a similar past. The city was built on an Algonquian village site by the river that was virtually a swamp. Through great engineering efforts, the swamp was filled in with millions of tons of rock hauled by area mule and wagon. Thus, the stage was set for architectural giants as Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright to design a new city with high style.

The notion of High Style architecture caught on in Chattanooga, much like other places, at the turn of the 20th century. The city's first major civic architect, Rueben Harrison Hunt, designed the 12-story James Building, Chattanooga's first skyscraper, in 1906. Hunt planned every major public building constructed in Chattanooga between 1895 and 1935. The Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Auditorium (1922), the Joel W. Solomon Federal Building and the U.S. Courthouse (1934), the Hamilton County Courthouse (1912), the Maclellan Building (1924), the Carnegie Library (1905), the St. John's Hotel (1915), the Second Presbyterian Church, the First Baptist Church, the Chattanooga Bank Building (1929), Miller Brothers Department Store, the Francis Willard Building, and Wyatt Hall with the Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences among many others. He was Chattanooga's Louis Sullivan.

In the decades following WWI, space became more important than place. Singularity of design replaced variety. The architecture used in constructing Chattanooga's municipal landscape took on many of the high style elements of the first half of the 20th century, including Gothic Revival, Romanesque Revival, Beaux Arts, Neoclassicism, Georgian Revival and Art Deco. You can find these styles in any major urban setting in the country by the 1950s. The local distinctiveness, however, is based on their vernacular components, such as construction materials or techniques that reflect the environment in which they were built, or the personal preferences of the architect or contractor. Such is the case in Chattanooga. Yet, more than that, these buildings signaled the emergence of Chattanooga as a major industrial center not only in the state, but the South.



1. Hamilton County Courthouse. - (1912). Neo-Classical Style. NR

Predominant architectural features are colossal portico; pilasters; unenriched tabature, parapet; unadorned roof line, columns – this case Corinthian. The exterior is Indiana Bedford limestone. This was built after the original Hamilton County Courthouse was struck by lightning and destroyed in 1910. R.H. Hunt was the architect.

Fireman’s Square. - This area derives its name from Firemen’s Memorial Fountain which was erected in memory of two firemen who died while battling a downtown fire. Erected in 1888. NR

- Hogshead Apartments. Constructed in 1912. This was a popular architectural style for luxury apartments of that era. It is five stories and has small porches on the Georgia Avenue and Oak Avenue sides with wrought iron railings.
- Robinson Apartments was constructed in 1907 of masonry construction with a traditional white columned front reminiscent of colonial and antebellum homes.

2. First Methodist Episcopal Church. - (1927-1976). Tudor Gothic Style.

What remains is the church tower, but the First Methodist Episcopal Church and parish house were constructed on this lot in 1927 by R H. Hunt. The church was demolished in 1976 and merge with Centenary Methodist church east on McCallie Avenue to form the First Century United Methodist Church.

3. Dome Building. (1892). Italian Renaissance Revival Style. NR

Adolph Ochs, business owner of The Chattanooga Times, constructed this building in 1892. In 1896 he purchased the New York Times and move there but retained close ties to Chattanooga. At the time of its construction, the Dome building was the city's tallest structure with six floors plus the domed cupola. Designed by New York architects, the focal point is the gilded cupola. The roof of the dome is made of sheet copper weighing about 1,300 pounds and gilded in gold, which at the time of construction cost \$700.

4. Carnegie Library Building. (1903)- Beaux Arts Style. NR

Andrew Carnegie donated money for the construction of libraries at the turn-of-the 19th century to provide everyone the opportunity to learn. Outstanding architectural features are the projected pediment, monumental coupled columns (Doric), balustrade and pedestal with rusticated ashlar finish. This is now privately owned as a law firm and residence.

5. Loveman's Building. (1890)- Sullivan-esque Style.

Founded by D. B. Loveman's in 1885 as a dry goods store, this was the city's first department store and become the largest for over 100 years. This downtown store was its flagship store. They began expanding into suburban malls in 1965 through the 1980. It was purchased by Profitt's and then Belk Department Stores. It was common practice in the 1960s to cover the exterior of "old" buildings with new material to make them appear updated and new. This building was sheathed with a metal covering until it was remained about 12 years ago. Notice that the stone pilasters were shaved down, and the capitals eliminated to have a secure fit. The building has been adaptively reused for condominiums.

6. Chattanooga Bank Building. (1929-: Mix of architectural styles including Tudor arches on 8th street (flattened), Sullivan-esque pilasters and terra cotta bands with Art Deco ornamentation in the eagles and parapet. NR

Interesting while this building was built for Chattanooga Bank, they never inhabited the building due to the stock market crash. Hamilton Bank occupied this building on the first floor with offices above.

7. James Building. (1906)- Sullivan-esque Style. NR

Characteristic of this style of architecture from the "Chicago School" are a multi-story office complex with highly regimented zones – ground floor, intermediate floors and the roof; vertical bands of windows, decorated terra cotta, projecting eaves, capital of pilaster strips. This was Chattanooga's first skyscraper. Named after Charles James, the developer of Signal Mountain.

8. Maclellan Building. (1924)- Beaux Arts Style. NR

This building was built by the Maclellan family for Provident Life Insurance Company that they founded in Chattanooga in 1880s. Characteristic of the style are the pedimented central pavilion, the alignment of the windows, the balustrade, enriched cornice with the decorative friezes, statuary, pilastered parapet, distinct ground story and attic by use of different materials.

9. Tivoli Theater. (1921)- Beaux Arts Style. NR

At the time of construction, this was considered “the finest theater in the entire South”. Designed by R. H. Hunt the theater was said to be an exact replica, but smaller, of the Tivoli in Chicago. It cost \$750,000 to build and has a 2,300-seat theater. This was the first public building in the South to install air-conditioning and one of the first five in the United States.

10. The Read House. (1927) - Georgian Style. NR

The Read House began life as the Crutchfield House in 1847. Chattanooga was emerging as an important railway center and the Crutchfield family built their hotel directly across the street from the rail terminal. Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy stayed here. It was used as a hospital in 1863. The hotel survived the entire war only to burn to the ground in 1867. Dr. John and Samuel Read purchased the site and re-built a grander hotel in 1871. In 1927, this building was constructed on this site retaining the Read house name. Most notables that have stand at this hotel: Winston Churchill, Al Capone, and Gary Cooper.

11. Volunteer Life Building. (1917)- Sullivanesque Style. NR

This building was constructed for the Volunteer Life Insurance Company using the technology of the day. It is one of the anchor properties of the Patten Parkway National Register Historic District.

12. Joel W. Solomon Federal Building. (1933)- Art Moderne Style. NR

This style united both modernism and classicism and was much favored by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930s. R. H. Hunt was the architect, but he partnered with NY architects of the Empire State Building to design this building. Therefore, these two buildings share many of the same decorative motifs. Especially noteworthy are the large and finely detailed aluminum windows deeply recessed within the walls of white Georgia marble. The interior has fossils in the polished marble walls and a WPA mural is in the courtroom on the third floor.

13. Flat Iron Buildings.

These buildings were all built during the first part of the 20th century following the commercial architecture style and technology of the times. Most interestingly, the shape of these buildings follows the street grid as two streets converge making them triangular.

- Flat Iron Building
- Cornerstones Bank Building
- Pickle Barrel
- St. John's (1915)

14. The Patton Hotel. (1908)- Sullivanesque Style. NR

Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce officials wanted to build a new hotel in town and Z.C. Patten, Sr. (owner of the Chattanooga Medicine Co. – now Chattem Drugs) financed the venture. Coca-Cola bottler J.T. Lupton, his son-in-law, later became involved. The architect was W.T. Downing of Atlanta. He designed many of the older gothic style buildings at UTC and Baylor School. Among the Hotel Patten's interesting features were a billiard room, a bowling alley, a barbershop and manicure parlor in the basement. The lobby featured a main dining room, a men's café, a bar and kitchen. On the second-floor mezzanine was a ballroom and orchestra room. Originally there were 251 rooms and the nightly rates started at \$1.50 in 1908.

15. Old Post Office. (1892)- Richardsonian Romanesque Style. NR

This building was constructed by the federal government. Prior to the civil war, this area was on the outskirts of town. In 1862, Union forces constructed a stone fort here to aid in the city's defenses, known as Fort Jones. This immense fort covered a large area. In 1886, the site was purchased by the Stone Fort Land Company which razed the fort (and used a clear majority of the stones for the foundation of the Walnut Street Bridge). However, the stone removal proved to be difficult and arduous. Characteristic of this style are: straight forward treatment of stone, broad roof planes and a select distribution of openings. The facade is punctuated with transom windows set deeply into the wall and arranged in groups in a ribbon-like fashion. Towers are short so as not to distract from the solid shape of the building.

16. City Hall. (1907)- Neoclassical Style. NR

Designed by R.H. Hunt, the building rests on a substantial base of rusticated stonework. Each facade is divided into three parts. Three is the number governing the entire design including the window panes. This architectural style was very popular in the first decade of the twentieth century, the era of the American Renaissance. This architectural style was used frequently to express national aspirations.

17. Warehouse Row (1904-1929)- Early 20th Century Commercial Architecture. NR

This is the only example of multi-storied row warehouses in Chattanooga still standing. These eight warehouses reflect a strong visual unity as well as have a strong historical association thus creating a highly cohesive unit. This strong sense of unity and monumentality is largely due to uniform materials, consistent setbacks, common scale and massing and similar architectural details. For the most part, the buildings remain unaltered in the front and rear. This area of town was heavily influenced by the railroad industry and just about everything built in this section of town was relative to that industry.

18. Freight Depot. (1871) (1894)- Vernacular Style. NR

One of only two surviving railroad freight depots in Chattanooga, the oldest part of this property was constructed in 1871 and was an iron foundry. In 1894, the structure was converted into a freight depot by the old Easter Kentucky & Georgia Railroad which was taken over by the Southern Railroad in 1901. This property was adaptively reused in 2007.

19. Development Resource Building (2001). New Urbanism.

This building is infill development to an established national register historic district block. It is a good lesson in how a building should be built to reflect the time that it is constructed and not try to be something that it simply is not. In this case, while the historic block was lost to demolition, this new building is modern but of the correct scale and proportion to fit into the urban streetscape. This city building houses all departments dealing with building and construction, i.e. building permits, engineering, public works, and planning departments.

20. Urban Stack (1870). Vernacular. NR

This is the oldest building in Chattanooga. It was built as the Southern Railroad passenger baggage building when the passenger terminal stood on the corner of Market Street and 13th Street. By the 1920s, the terminal was too small, so a new one was built down the street – now known as the Chattanooga Choo Choo. Southern Railway built an administration building in 1922 on the former passenger terminal site. This property has been adaptively reused as apartments. The former baggage building became an engineering building for the railroad until it was given to the city in 2004. The city, in turn, gave the building to Cornerstones for saving and renovation. Urban Stack is one of Cornerstones restaurants partners – they participate in Wine over Water Food + Wine event.