

The Landmark Society of Western New York
133 South Fitzhugh Street
Rochester NY 14608
www.landmarksociety.org

About This Tour

The tour starts at Rochester's City Hall, 30 Church Street. On this walking tour, you'll discover the 100-Acre Tract, Rochester's oldest "neighborhood," and see the Court House Square, now the home of the Monroe County Office Building and Rochester's former city hall. For tour maps, see last pages

In 1803, Ebenezer Allan turned over the title of 100 acres alongside the west bank of the Genesee River to William Fitzhugh, Charles Carroll, and Colonel Nathaniel Rochester. In 1811, Colonel Rochester subdivided the parcel into building lots, reserving the parcel in the center as the Court House Square. In 1817 when Rochesterville was incorporated as a village, the former 100-Acre Tract became the center of government and commerce as well as a residential neighborhood.



City Hall

The first stop on the tour is **City Hall (old Federal Building) (1)**, 30 Church Street (corner of Church and Fitzhugh Streets). Built between 1885 and 1889, the Federal Building is one of the three 19th-century government buildings remaining in Rochester. This superb example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture is characterized by the massive walls, arches and towers that dominate its brown sandstone exterior.

In contrast, the building's interior is defined by delicate detail and embellished with fine materials. The elegant three-story atrium, with its cast-iron work and marble columns, is one of the most beautiful interiors in the county and should not be missed. (The building is open to the public weekdays, 9-5.)

Originally constructed as the federal office and courthouse building, the old Federal Building has housed a number of government operations including taxation, customs, draft boards, and, until 1930, Rochester's main post office. In 1973, the U.S. government offices were relocated to a new building on State Street and for three years this building remained vacant.

The City of Rochester acquired the building in 1975 for \$1.00, and started renovation and construction of a 45,000-square-foot addition. This award-winning project, honored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, was completed in 1978 and shortly thereafter, the City's administration offices moved into the "new" City Hall.

From your vantage point at the corner of Church and Fitzhugh Streets, look north.

You'll see the **Downtown United Presbyterian Church (2)**, 113-121 N. Fitzhugh Street. Originally called "Brick Church," this building, designed by Andrew Jackson Warner, was constructed in 1860, in the Romanesque Revival style, characterized by the round-arched window and door openings. It replaced a small brick structure erected on this site in 1827. In 1903, a fire in the lantern factory directly opposite the church spread to the church's tall wooden spire, which then fell through the burning roof. Only the building's side walls and two large iron columns supporting its interior corners survived.

J. Foster Warner, son of A. J. Warner, was hired as the architect when the church was rebuilt along the same lines as the original, with just one important exterior change: the Gothic steeples were replaced with two square Italianate towers to match the rest of the structure's Romanesque style. Also, during the reconstruction, Tiffany stained-glass windows were installed in the sanctuary. In 1973-74, three downtown Presbyterian congregations merged into one and the name was changed to Downtown United Presbyterian Church.

Andrew Jackson Warner (1833-1910) and his son, J. Foster Warner (1859-1937) designed many of Rochester's most enduring 19th-century buildings. Each was able to work successfully in the varied architectural styles that became fashionable during their long, notable careers.

Walk south on Fitzhugh Street toward E. Main Street.



Downtown United Presbyterian Church

Notice the tall cream-colored Neo-Classical Revival building on your right. It is called City Place, now a Monroe County office building, 50 W. Main Street. Originally the **Duffy-McInnerney Department Store (3)**, this 1907 building has a distinctive terra cotta exterior.

Now look across Main Street at the Monroe County Office Building, 39 W. Main Street.



City Place



Monroe County Office Building

The **Monroe County Office Building (4)** is the former Monroe County Court House, built in 1894-96. It is the third courthouse on this site. Designed by J. Foster Warner, it replaced a smaller courthouse erected in 1850-51. The present building, representing the Neo-Classical revival of the 1890s, is a handsome example of the Italian Renaissance style, with its granite exterior featuring round-arched windows and heavy hood moldings. Look up at the wood statue of "Justice" in the front niche of the building, which was originally carved for and located atop the dome of the second county courthouse. Walk inside and see the sky lit central courtyard, a model of historic civic grandeur. It is open to the public weekdays from 9-5. Before you leave, look for the cornerstone with the three construction dates.

Cross Main Street and continue along the east side of Fitzhugh Street. You'll soon be in front of the Academy Building, 13 S. Fitzhugh Street.

The **Academy Building (5)** (originally the Rochester Free Academy) was constructed in 1872-73 and represents the latter phase of the Gothic Revival in the 19th century. A major work of local architect Andrew Jackson Warner, it is a masterpiece of sophisticated design and expert craftsmanship. Look up and enjoy the visual delight of the elaborate windows and arches, floral-incised panels, and delicately carved colonnettes.

The Academy is the fourth school building on this site, which was deeded to the School District in 1831. It was the only high school in the city for 30 years, became the Municipal Court and Education Building in 1904, and served as headquarters for the Board of Education from 1926-79. In 1981, the building's new owners transformed its stark interior into office space with a beautiful and dramatically sky lit central atrium.

Next to the Academy Building is St. Luke & St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh Street.



Academy Building



St. Luke's/St. Simone Cyrene Episcopal Church (6) was built beside the new Erie Canal in 1824 and is the oldest surviving public building in Rochester. (Try to imagine Broad Street as a body of water.) Designed by New York architect Josiah R. Brady, it is an unusually early example of 19th-century Gothic Revival style. Although its rectangular plan, pedimented gable and slightly projecting tower conform to the then-popular New England meetinghouse style, its pointed windows, pinnacles and many interior details are of Gothic origin. In 1988, St. Luke's, Rochester's oldest Episcopal congregation, combined with St. Simon Cyrene, the city's only African-American Episcopal congregation.

Directly across the street from St. Luke's Church (at the corner of Broad and Fitzhugh Streets) is Irving Place, 30 Broad Street, Rochester's first city hall.

St. Luke's/St. Simone Cyrene

Irving Place (7) is a handsome five-story building with a bell tower, designed by Andrew Jackson Warner and built in 1873-74. Originally its back door (now the front door on Broad Street) opened onto the Erie Canal. The building was constructed of Lockport Greystone with a smooth sandstone trim. The 6,230-pound bell in the square tower was cast in 1851 and originally hung in the second County Court House dome. Old City Hall, like the Academy Building, is characterized by its angularity and vertical feeling, but the design is a more simplified Gothic Style.

The exterior has had few alterations over the years. The main entrance was removed in 1894 to accommodate the connecting arcade of the County Building to the north, and the pointed spire is gone from the bell tower. Originally, there was a small park between the County Court House and old City Hall.

When erected, the interior consisted of four stories with a large auditorium on the top floor. An additional fifth floor was constructed within the auditorium space prior to the turn of the century. City government eventually outgrew the 19th-century building, and its offices were relocated in 1977 to the newly renovated Federal Building on Church Street. After being vacant for three years, old City Hall was rehabilitated by a private



Irving Place

Standing on the corner of Broad and Fitzhugh Streets looking south, you'll discover a curious sight partially hidden by trees: a graceful residential structure surrounded by large office buildings and the entrance to a public garage.

This is the **Ebenezer Watts House (8)**, 47 S. Fitzhugh Street. Built between 1825 and 1827 for Ebenezer Watts, Rochester's first hardware merchant, this house served as the family homestead until 1874. A blend of late Federal and early Greek Revival details, it is an example of this transition era of architecture. Monroe County has created a plaza in front of the building and uses this oldest residential building in downtown as a conference center.

Turn right onto Broad Street and walk until you come to the Plymouth Avenue intersection. Then turn left (south) on Plymouth Avenue and continue walking on the east side of the street until you come to a crosswalk



Ebenezer Watts House



You'll be standing directly across from the **Central Church of Christ (9)**, 101 S. Plymouth Avenue. With its tall spire and slate roof, this English Gothic church once sheltered the oldest religious congregation in Rochester. This was the third house of worship for the first Presbyterian Church, which was founded in 1815. The previous church was located on Fitzhugh Street until it was destroyed by fire in 1869. The congregation sold that parcel to the City, which built old City Hall, and moved here to the South Plymouth Avenue site. Constructed of Albion and Medina stone, the present church was designed by Andrew Jackson Warner and erected in 1871. The interior is notable for its Tiffany windows, as well as its black walnut paneling and pews.

In 1974, the First Presbyterian Church merged with two other downtown congregations and relocated to the Downtown Presbyterian Church on N. Fitzhugh Street. Since 1976, the Central Church of Christ has occupied the building.

Central Church of Christ

Cross Plymouth Avenue and walk west on Spring Street. At the corner of Spring and Washington Streets, you'll see the Bevier Memorial Building, 42 S. Washington St.

The **Bevier Memorial Building (10)**, located on the site of Colonel Nathaniel Rochester's 1823-24 home (see plaque on corner of building), was erected in 1908 for Rochester Institute of Technology's School of Fine and Applied Arts. Designed by noted Rochester architect Claude Bragdon, it is highlighted by extensive blue, red and green ceramic decoration, a Bragdon trademark. After RIT moved to its new campus in 1968, the building was used as a community center for a few years, and then remained vacant for several years. It has since been rehabilitated for office use.

To visit the Corn Hill Historic District now, walk across the pedestrian bridge on your left.



Bevier Memorial Building

Corn Hill Historic District: Almost from the beginning of our city's history, this neighborhood has been one of Rochester's favorite residential districts. Protected by the Genesee River to the east, the Erie Canal, which followed the present route of Broad Street, and the Genesee Valley Canal (now Ford Street), the area offered early 19th century Rochesterians the same advantages residents still enjoy today—buffered from the heavy commercial traffic of downtown, but still close enough to make a stroll to work or shop a pleasant and convenient experience.

Millers and merchants built impressive homes here during Rochester's first growth after the building of the Erie Canal (1820s and 1830s) while real estate investors built more modest dwellings for sale or rent to the city's booming population. The neighborhood was first known by its political designation as the Third Ward, but as earlier cottages were replaced by more substantial dwellings in later architectural styles, Rochesterians dubbed it the "Ruffled Shirt District" or the "Silk Stocking District." Known for its architectural diversity and sense of style, the old Third Ward was also favored for its congeniality and commitment to improving life in the city. Behind many of these historic doors were held the founding meetings of such important educational and civic institutions as the University of Rochester and Rochester General Hospital.



Campbell-Whittlesey House

The Corn Hill neighborhood is home to a variety of architectural styles including Greek Revival (1830s-1850s), Gothic Revival (1840s-1870s), Italianate (1850s-1880s), and Queen Anne (1880s-1900).

The Hoyt-Potter House, Landmark Society headquarters, 133 South Fitzhugh Street, was purchased in 1991. It houses the Society's education center and the Wenrich Memorial Library. Together with the adjacent Campbell-Whittlesey House Museum, the two mid-19th-century Greek Revival houses form the Landmark Center. The Campbell-Whittlesey House represents an upper middle-class household that reflects the Greek Revival style of decoration and the effects of the Erie Canal during Rochester's "boomtown" years between 1825 and 1845.

Directly across S. Washington Street is the Brewster-Burke House, 130 Spring Street.



Brewster-Burke House

The **Brewster-Burke House** is a distinguished example of the mid-19th-century transition from the classical to the romantic style of architecture. It is notable for its fine proportions and rich details, drawing from Moorish, Egyptian and Italian influences. The house was built in 1849 for Henry R. Brewster, a Rochester insurance agent. In 1866, the property was conveyed to the William Burke family who occupied it until the early 20th century. Subsequent occupants included the Rochester Public Health Nursing Association and the RIT Graphic Arts School. The Landmark Society purchased the property in 1970 to ensure its preservation, and it served as Landmark Society headquarters until 1991.

Next to the Brewster-Burke house is the **Jonathan Child House**, 33 S. Washington Street. Prominently located near the Erie Canal (now Broad Street), this Greek Revival mansion was constructed in 1837 for Jonathan Child, Rochester's first mayor. With its five Corinthian columns and rich detail, it is the most elaborate example of Greek Revival architecture in Rochester. The entablature and the pediment are finely detailed with Greek ornament, as are the window lintels and the matching side entrance porticos.

In the early 20th century, this former residence was used as a clubhouse and later as a church. In 1957, the Landmark Society purchased the property to save it from demolition. It became a primary example of adapting a historic residence to serve a contemporary business use. The rear addition was added in 1972.



Jonathan Child House

Now you're at the corner of S. Washington and Broad Streets. Cross Broad Street and continue one block north to W. Main Street. Look diagonally left and note a row of contiguous buildings that form the southern border of the Bridge Square Historic District along the north side of W. Main Street.

The **Cascade Historic District**, officially the Bridge Square National Register Historic District, once had two lift bridges that carried the roadway over the Erie Canal (Broad and W. Main Streets). Featuring industrial and warehouse buildings, many now converted to new uses, the district's most significant building is the United States Hotel, built in 1826 in anticipation of the need for lodging for travelers and crews brought to Rochesterville by the newly opened Erie Canal. It is downtown's oldest surviving commercial building and also a representative example of Federal-style commercial architecture that once flourished in Rochester.

Turn right on Main Street and walk one block to the corner of Main and Plymouth Avenue. Now look diagonally north across West Main Street.

You'll see **Hochstein Memorial Music School** (the former Central Presbyterian Church) 50 N. Plymouth Avenue. Constructed in 1856 for the Central Presbyterian Church, this building is architecturally significant as a fine example of Romanesque Revival architecture. The church was constructed in two parts: the first (south) part was completed in 1856; the second (north) part, which houses the sanctuary, was completed in 1890.

In 1973, when three Presbyterian churches merged, this building became the property of the Downtown United Presbyterian Church. In 1978, the Hochstein Memorial Music School, a long-established Rochester music institution, acquired the building. Since 1920, the Hochstein School has provided high-quality music education to adults and children regardless of family income.



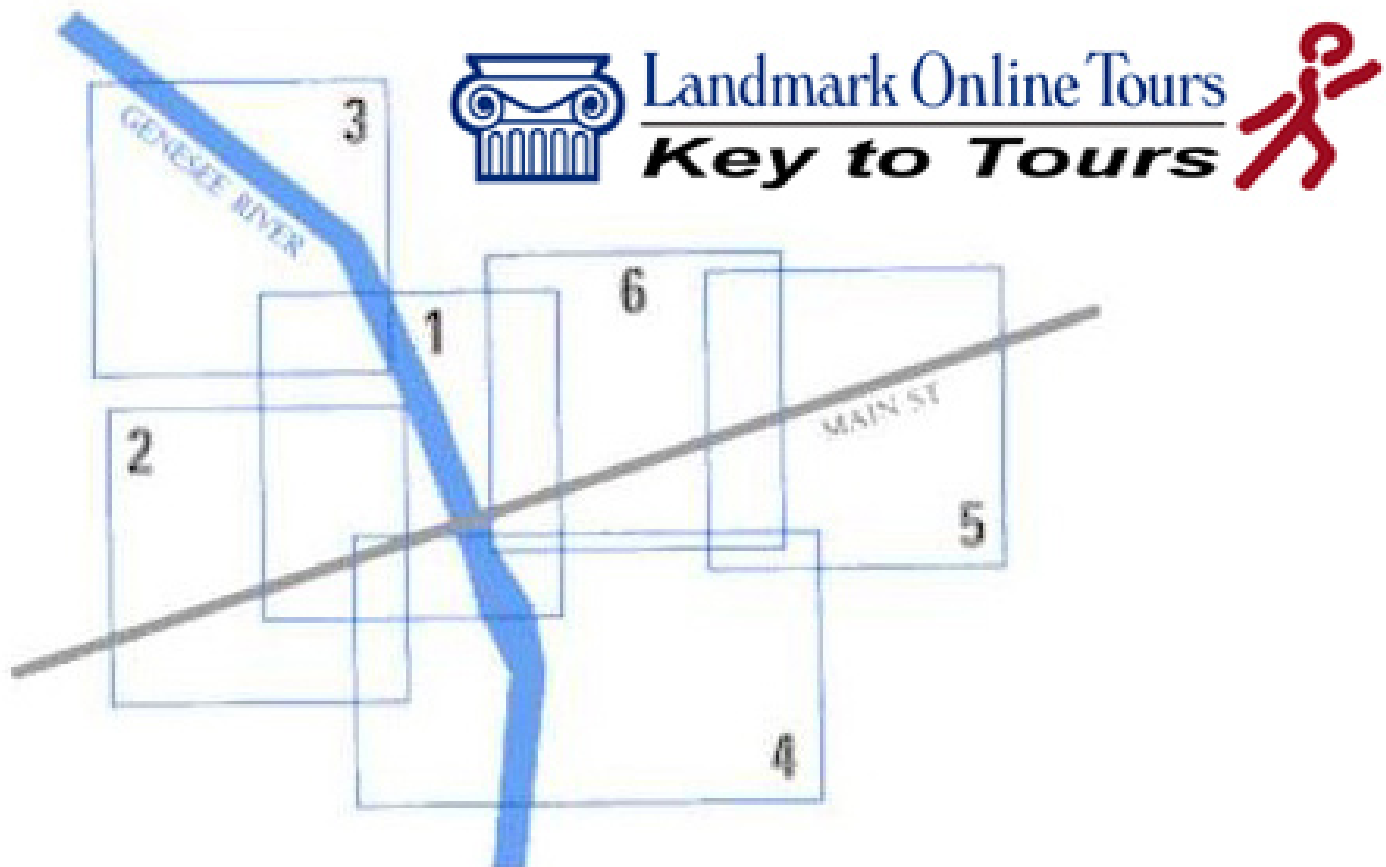
Hochstein Memorial Music School

Continue east to the intersection of W. Main and S. Fitzhugh Streets to complete this tour.



This tour is a 3/5 of a mile loop.

Walking Tours of Downtown Rochester



1. Central City Tour
2. Hundred Acre Tract Tour
3. High Falls-Brown's Race Historic District Tour
4. The Southern Gateways Tour
5. East End and Cultural District Tour
6. Liberty Pole and City East Loop Tour